LEARNING / G1
Ambassador
Kenney goes to Girlstown

BUSINESS / B1
NTC plans new scheme
to bill voice calls, removal of load expiry

ACROSS / A17
Peasant leader
tortured, says rights group

ENTERTAINMENT / E1
Goma waives fee
for digital movie to help 'sinking' industry

SPORTS / A32
Serena defeats sister
Venus for third Wimbledon crown

Recession dating: Hearts flutter as markets stutter

CHICAGO—CREDIT THE recession for stay-at-home vacations and more game-night parties at home. But also give the economic downturn a shout for spurring more first dates.

RECESSION A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, July 6, 2009 • 11 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 208 P18

140 Filipino veterans get medals for bravery

HONOLULU—MEN AND WOMEN FROM the Philippines were promised recognition and benefits when they enlisted to fight alongside US troops during World War II.

Many of those honors are only arriving now, 64 years after the war ended.

"I feel like a little boy going up to heaven," former infantry Sgt. Jose Ortega, 83,

I HONORING A22

Cotabato bomb explosion kills 5

BOMB ATTACK A crowd gathers near what remains of a "fashion" store that absorbed much of the impact of a powerful bomb which exploded outside the Cotabato Immaculate Conception Cathedral (inset) in Cotabato City. The military blamed the attack on Moro separatist rebels. AFP

Attack rips store as bishop says Mass

By Inquirer Mindanao and Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila

COTABATO CITY—THE archbishop was delivering a sermon about peacemakers when a powerful explosion ripped through a nearby store selling roasted pigs, rocking the packed cathedral.

Churchgoers screamed and rushed to the altar. Others fell, wounded or dying, including a woman whose window shopping was torn off.

In the bloodiest of a spate of bomb attacks that have rocked parts of Mindanao in recent weeks, five people were killed and about 45 wounded yesterday when a homemade bomb tore through the Isolani store outside the Cotabato Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

Two people were taken in for questioning and Misbothong condemned the attack.

COTABATO A20

US ready to intervene to ensure clean, free RP polls

By Amanda Dorotlo

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION has signaled the strongest message yet that the United States is prepared to intervene to ensure free and clean elections in the Philippines next year.

Speaking to reporters at the US Embassy celebration of July 4th on Thursday, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said "a postponement of the general elections next year will be a cause for concern in Washington."

This was the bluntest expression of Washington's concern over the holding of the May 2010 elections, which has created considerable doubts in the country in the face of mixed signals from the Arroyo administration. Envoys could not have been more emphatic.

ANALYSIS

She unveiled the issue hinself without the diplomatic niceties. "We believe elections are a good way of renewing democracy," Kenney reminded Filipinos in a statement that left no doubt that Washington wanted to see a change of administration in next year's elections.

US concerns over Philippine elections were expressed in the

US READY A21

Be ready for manual polls, too, Enrile says

SENATE PRESIDENT JUAN Ponce Enrile wants preparations for manual voting in countryside, just in case there are further hiccups.

In the House of Representatives, Majority Leader Arthur Defensor suggested that the companies involved in the automation project—Smartmatic International Corp. and its local partner Total Information Management Corp. (TIM)—double or triple their performance bond to ensure compliance.

Enrile said dahil radio yesterday that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) "must assume the possibility" that the P7.2-billion computerization program for next year's elections would not push ahead.

"They have to prepare for manual elections just the same so that we will not have any problem because it would be dangerous if the polls do not push through," he said, underscoring the need for "every safeguard" to be adopted by the Comelec.

The Smartmatic-TIM consortium won the Comelec bidding for the computerization of the May 2010 national and local elections, but squabbling over who controls the purse and decision-making nearly torpedoed the deal.

On Friday, the two companies issued out their differences and

BE READY A21

Stakes reach ₱300M in varsity hoops

By Franck T.J. Ochoa, Joaraine W. Reyes and Cedelf P. Tupas
Inquirer Sports

(First of four parts)

SPECIAL REPORT Game Fixing

ON JULY 24, 2008, A man wearing a red shirt and slippers sneaked behind Manuel "Mac" Inocencio outside the Far Eastern University campus on Morayta and fired two shots to his back.

The assailant calmly uncovered the silencer from the barrel of his gun, put the weapon in his backpack and melted in the evening rush hour at Manila's University Belt.

Inocencio, a rising star in the PBL basketball scene, fell bloodied.

The 6-foot-3 forward survived the attack—one bullet barely missed his heart—but the shooting, in a flash, blew the lid off a lucrative game-fixing operation that has stifled what athleticism had been seen as a pristine world of college basketball.

As much as ₱300 million changed hands in recent years in each season of the Universities Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), officials say.

All of a sudden, the vibrant world of varsity basketball, which used to be dished with bright school colors and lively chants, has become a bleak, mute arena of paranoia.

Players, who used to be surrounded by cheerleaders and team mascots, were shielded by a phalanx of bodyguards from oncoming admirers.

At least three schools are known to have tightened their watch on their players: PBL University of the East and Ateneo de Manila University.

"There was heightened security (al-

STAKES A23

FEU/FS Banzuet Survives gun attack. FILIMON NOTO

Villar prefers talking in small forums

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IT'S INTIMATE, TOWN HALL-style meetings when Sen. Manuel Villar feels right at home.

Away from the glaring lights of televised forums for 2010 presidential hopefuls, Villar fielded last week questions on how he planned to tackle problems besetting the country should he be elected president in 2010.

The setting was a community function at the upscale Valle Verde 4 clubhouse in Pasig City aimed at getting to know the presidential aspirants up close and personal, and at enabling the residents to raise concerns peculiar to their areas.

VILLAR A22

DANCE TRIBUTE A fan of pop star Michael Jackson dances to commemorate the singer during a memorial in Taipei. AFP

FINAL FAREWELL

Lavish memorial for 'King of Pop'

LOS ANGELES—HUNDREDS OF millions of fans across the world will bid a final farewell to Michael Jackson on Tuesday in a lavish memorial to the magic "King of Pop" that is expected to bring America to a standstill.

An exclusive guest list of family and VIPs will be joined by around 11,000 fans crowded into the Staples Center in Los Angeles for the sendoff, which Jackson once said he hoped would be "the greatest show on earth."

Precise details of the service have been kept under wraps, but amid speculation that some of the biggest names in show business may perform in an event intended as a celebration of the tortured pop icon's life and times.

Jackson's family has not revealed where the singer will be buried.

The musical star earlier sparked the idea of a poignant ceremony at Neverland Ranch, which posed logistical headaches due to its remote location in stay Santa Barbara

JACKSON A33

WEATHER FORECAST

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'GMA should not run for Congress'

But expert on Charter says there's nothing to stop her except 'delicadeza'

By Tarra Quismundo
Inquirer Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—FR. JOAQUIN BERNAS, AN EXpert on constitutional law and a member of the 1987 Constitutional Commission, said he would rather that President Macapagal-Arroyo did not run for Congress in 2010 as representative of the second district of Pampanga.

"We never thought the President would be humble. If I were her, I would not seek a lower office," Bernas said, when the focus of Mr. Arroyo's purported plan to run for Congress came up in a forum of the Council of the Laity of the archdiocese of San Fernando here on Saturday.

Bernas, dean emeritus of the Ateneo College of Law and an Ateneo colleague, said there were no legal obstacles to stop Mr. Arroyo, who had previously served as vice president and a senator, should she decide to run for representative.

"None, delicadeza thing lugay (as I properly in another sense)," Bernas told reporters.

Addressing an audience of 1,000, Bernas was asked why the Constitution was explicitly against the reelection of a president yet silent on prohibiting a president from seeking a lower position.

"We cannot have everything in the Constitution. There were more important provisions," he said.

The question on everyone's mind was finally asked: What if Mr. Arroyo's allies succeed in changing the form of government from presidential to parliamentary, and what if Mr. Arroyo runs for Congress and wins, could she be elected prime minister?

Bernas's reply: "The prime minister is chosen by the lawmakers of parliament, not by the direct votes of the people."

That is why, he said, it was important for the voters to elect the right leaders.

Economics adviser It's true, possible for President Arroyo to remain in office longer.

Bernas said that he did not think so. "I have a feeling it will not happen ... but I have an assurance of this."

He pointed out that martial rule under the late ex-dictator Ferdinand Marcos could not have happened without the support of the military.

Of Mr. Arroyo's 15 visits to Pampanga since Feb. 26, 13 were to the second district: three in Candaba, Arayat, Lubao, Sta. Rita, Porac and Mexico; and...

It was the interesting revelation by of the visits and the scale of the accompanying service caravans that fueled suspicions that she would run for Congress.

If Ms. Arroyo were to declare her candidacy in November, candidate and Ateneo educator Randy David said he would also against her in the Pampanga second district.

Like the Macapagals, the David clan is from Pampanga. David could inject the kind of nonpolitical political heat that Fr. Ed Bernas generated in 2007, unite the opposition and most of the disenchanted people.

Support for Cory hearkens back to prayerful time, says prelate

By Fe Zamora

THE OUTPOURING OF PRAYERS for ailing President Corazon Aquino was akin to the years before the 1986 Edsa Revolution when the Philippines was a "prayerful nation," Jaro Archbishop Ramon Arguelles said yesterday in his homily at the healing Mass for Aquino at the Cocoland's 5-hospital in Makati City.

"We should all go back to the prayerful nation that we were before the 1986 Edsa Revolution and during [our administration]," said Arguelles, a Marian priest.

"Ten years since an administration close to God then during her administration," he added under the Mass.

"Healing period" Fr. Fernando Suarez is scheduled to celebrate today's healing Mass for Aquino, according to her spokesperson Deedee Siytangco.

The former president was diagnosed with colon cancer last year. She has been confined at Makati Medical Center (MMC) since June 25 for convalescence and loss of appetite.

Every her hospital bed, Aquino continues to pray "for the nation," Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman told the hospital yesterday. "Her love not changed. Mom still putting the country, Mary praying for all of us, for the nation."

In the 1980s, Aquino, a Marian devotee, was given a special award "to empower her and her presidency" by Simon Lucia, the late seer of Bicol. The rosary was handmade by Lucia, who died in 2005.

In past interviews, Aquino said the rosary helped her survive seven coup attempts against her administration.

The Jesus is Lord Movement (JIL) led by Bro. Eddie Villanueva also held a special prayer for the healing of Aquino at Music Museum in Greenhills, San Juan City.

During the service, Villanueva prayed over Aquino, who was represented by former Agusian Reform Secretary Philip Juico and his wife Margie, who was the social secretary to Malacañang during the Aquino administration.

JIL spokesperson Andrea E. Tibubos said Villanueva had issued a pastoral letter to all JIL congregations in the Philippines and 44 cities around the world to hold a special prayer for Aquino on July 5.

Justice Secretary Alberto Agra, who served as Aquino's legal adviser, read the solemn prayer for the 78th of the nine-day novena of healing Masses held at the Sto. Niño de Pax chapel at Greenhills E.

Former members of Aquino's Cabinet attended the service with their families, as they have been doing since July 1, when she was supported to Ocean "intensive" condition.

AN OVERFLOW crowd prays for former President Cory Aquino outside the Santo Niño de Pax chapel at Greenhills, Makati, during the fifth of a nine-day novena for her recovery. Aquino is at the Makati Medical Center in critical "but delicate" condition as she battles colon cancer. GMANEWS.TV

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Imported rice cost RP 45% more, papers show

BY THE PHILIPPINES, THE WORLD'S BIGGEST rice importer, paid almost $950 a ton for 15 million tons of rice bought from Vietnam over the last year, far more than initially estimated, according to documents said by Reuters.

Contracted by Reuters on Friday Agrivet, trade Secretary Arthur Yap did not disclose how much the government had paid, but said the difference was not unusual for a government contract and that it was "a good deal at that time."

News that the government paid almost 45 percent more for rice could give more pressure on the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, which has been battered by criticism over government contracts, including a $329 million telecommunications deal with China's ZTE Corp that was canceled amid reports of bribe kickbacks.

Extraordinary deal

Where users of the rice deal first broke in January, trade sources estimated the price at $380 a ton (cost and freight), around the level that rice cargoes were trading at on the spot market, although government-to-government deals are often concluded at much higher rates because buyers want to guarantee supplies.

"It must have been an extraordinary deal, that's why there's an extraordinary cost," said Publino Milagra, an agricultural economics consultant with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

"There is more to it than meets the eye," Milagra added.

The documents obtained by Reuters placed the deal at about $925 million.

Neither the Philippines nor Vietnam, the world's No. 2 rice exporter after Thailand, disclosed the pricing. Nearly all of the 1.5 million tons of rice arrived in Manila last month.

"It is incorrect to compare rice spot prices with those considering the volume and terms of payment for rice stocks," Yap said in a text message.

Glenn Gregorio, Vietnam's economic counselor in Manila, said the Philippines government "is paying upward of six months in terms," adding that Thailand quoted prices higher than Vietnam when the contract was awarded.

"The process of buying was done very openly. The Vietnamese turned [out] to be cheaper and were willing to sell for six months as good prices with 6-8 months credit. It was a good deal at the time," Yap said.

"Our buying is transparent, quiet and efficient and I feel been criticized by international watchers with helping stabilize rice prices globally and ensuring food food security."

Intergovernment deals

The documents from the National Food Authority (NFA) showed that the country's grain import was paid $540 for a ton (cost and freight) for 1.5 million tons of long grain white rice with grades of 5 percent, 15 percent and 25 percent broken grain from Vietnam's Southern Food Corp, Vietnam's largest rice exporter.

Vietnam's 5 percent broken variety was quoted between $380-$400 a ton. Thai on board basis in January-February, while the 25 percent grade was at between $330-$400, according to Reuters data.

That compared with $410-$430 a ton for 5 percent broken grade and $380-$390 for 25 percent grade in December.

Freight cost should be anywhere between $25-$35 per ton for shipments from Vietnam to the Philippines as ocean losses, traders said.

Bidding process

In intergovernment deals, the Philippines and its potential rice exporters tend to submit supply offers "and those we choose the lowest price," said a senior NFA official who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

The official said that at times the price for different rice grades was normal. "That's the practice, it's not illegal," the official added.

Manila opted for a government-to-government deal to secure the bulk of its rice imports this year to avoid a repeat of what happened in 2008 when a series of tenders by the NFA helped push prices of the grains to a record $1,000/ton from the end of 2007.

The Philippines spent $1.5 billion or less part a record 2.7 million tons of rice last year, 1.4 million tons of which was supplied by Vietnam.

Reuters

Rice production in RP to fall 70% by 2020–report

AMSTERDAM—RICE PRODUCTION IN THE Philippines could fall by 50 to 70 percent by 2020 as yields drop due to the effects of climate change, a report by an advocacy group said.

Oxfam International said that among the worst hit by climate change will be nations that grow rice, the world's most common food, like the Philippines.

Yields are predicted to drop an average 10 percent for every one-degree Celsius rise in temperatures in countries like the Philippines. At the same time, China will grow more rice as the area of warm temperatures spreads, it said.

Corn is another staple that will be unduly affected by climate change since it is particularly vulnerable to warm areas, it said. Corn is the main source of food for 250 million people in east Africa and is used as animal feed around the world.

Oxfam said it prepared the study for the inclusion of Development Studies by surveying farmers around the world, who reported that changing seasonal patterns were already affecting their ability to plan the sowing and harvesting of crops. The results, it said, were "strikingly consistent across entire geographies."

Farmers have begun changing their crops in the region, where a one-degree Celsius temperature shift can make traditional crops unsustainable. Unpredictable rainfall makes their choices of new crops a gamble, the report said.

The advocacy group said that chronic hunger may be "the defining human tragedy of this century," as climate change causes growing seasons to shift, crops to fail, and storms and droughts to ravage fields.

Food security, climate change

Oxfam released the report Monday as leaders of the Group of Eight wealthiest nations prepare to meet in Italy this week with an agenda set to include both food security and climate change.

The report, "What Happened to the Stimulus?" was meant to add urgency to the G-8 meeting and to a broader group of 17 countries, the Major Economies Forum, which convenes later in the week in try to redirect negotiations on a new climate change agreement due to be completed in December.

It says that as the weather changes, millions of people in areas suffering food scarcity will have to give up traditional crops, possibly leading to social upheavals such as mass migrations and possible conflict over water resources.

Rich countries in temperate climate zones, such as northern Europe and parts of the United States, will benefit from warmer weather and more rainfall, less far more people in better, poorer countries will face more erratic and expensive food supplies, said the British-based nonprofit group. *AP*

Dropouts given second chance

ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS of any age who want to resume their schooling should register this month to be able to take the nationwide Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency (ALS A&E) Test in October.

In a statement, the Department of Education's Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS) said that those who hurdle the exam would be able to jump to the next level in basic education, get into vocational courses, and even land a government job.

"ALS Test registration, administration and certification is free," the bureau said.

Those interested have up to July 31 to sign up at designated registration and testing centers in 1,907 Implementing Units nationwide.

The bureau said they can also call 5424-3551 to 58, 6205-1130, or 0919-4568027, or send a text or e-mail to enrlbals@gmail.com.

The test is designed to measure the competencies of those who have not completed either their formal elementary or secondary education.

Those who pass the elementary level exam—even if they had lost their the required 10 years in their previous schooling—can enroll in high school lecturers. Likewise, those who hurdle the secondary level exam can enroll in post-secondary courses (like technical or vocational courses), "the bureau said.

"They can also access the Abraham Foundation Inc. and Tesda skills training programs and have the opportunity to acquire eligibility for government employment positions under [Civil Service Commission] Resolution No. 499," the bureau added. **Philip C. Tubeza**

Ernesto M. Ampil, 69

ERNESTO MORALES AMPIL DIED ON JULY 4. He was 69.

Mang Nito, of Cogtingkoy, Tondo, Manila, had retired from San Miguel Corp. and was his own consultant for finance of Integrated Distributorship Solutions Inc.

He is survived by his wife Amanda; children Lalaine, Ariel Jose, Maria Carmela and Fernando; grandchildren Fernando Joshua, Carlos Emmanuel, Jose Israel, Agnes Pamhela, Giselle Nin Kyle Anadi, Felice, and Linda.

His body lies at Pridential Memorial Chapel on Rhoeda Street, Sampaloc, Manila. Cremation is on July 7 at 3 p.m. at Eternal Gardens, Balintawak, Quezon City.

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Scrapping of tax on stock trades seen to boost market

By Doris C. Dumlao

IN A BID TO STIMULATE THE lethargic stock market and make it more attractive to investors, President Macapagal-Arroyo has signed a new law permanently scrapping the documentary stamp tax (DST) on the trading of listed shares.

The Philippine Stock Exchange announced the enactment of the law, which took effect last month, after 166 days following the DST law by the President on June 30. The law's absence had long been lobbying for the new legislation to boost the capital market by reducing the cost of investing in listed stocks.

"During a period of heightened risk aversion, bringing down the cost of doing business is a sound trade-off to attract investments. Showing faith such as the DST scrapped the country to create a more attractive business climate amid this global crisis," PSE president and CEO Francis Lim said in a press statement.

The new law comes on a time when the government is trying to collect more revenue to fund a widen budget deficit of P250 billion this year.

The government stands to lose P1.4 billion in revenue every year from the new law, Department of Finance estimates showed.

Lim expressed gratitude to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and legislators, saying the law would help make the stock market more robust as investors would be motivated to place their money in high-yielding investments rather than time deposits.

"The law frees up liquidity which investors need in order to place their money in equities again, increasing their trading activities and ultimately the value of their portfolios," Lim said.

Lim also said the DST scrapping would help the government in its privatization program, as it would encourage more investors to participate in the initial public offerings of government-owned companies.

"Our government is trying to raise funds to finance its infrastructure projects and the DST scrapping will help in this regard," he said.

Lim said the PSE would continue to push for the abolition of the capital gains tax (CGT) on the sale of listed shares.

The CGT is imposed at 5 percent on the net gains realized from the sale of shares not traded in the stock exchange.

Lim said the PSE would continue to push for the abolition of the CGT. Pilipino Reuters report

Correction

IN THE JULY 5 ISSUE, A FRONTPAGE opinion erroneously described Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as "the trusting rookie caught in the Alaska governor's race." She was the running mate of Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain in the 2008 US elections. She was not a governor when she ran for vice president.

The Inquirer regrets the error.

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In Lucena, 'sacred noise' to recall disaster victims

By Dallo T Millarijo
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—SHRINE BELL will wail and church bells will peal at 9 a.m. today for one minute as a symbolic start of the city's observance of National Disaster Consciousness Month.

The "sacred noise" will serve as a signal to residents to pause from their activities and offer a silent prayer for all victims of past disasters in the city and elsewhere, said Francis Edwin Maldabanan, city public information officer.

"All police cars, motorcycles and fire trucks will sound their sirens for one minute. The city government also requested all churches to ring their bells at the same time," Maldabanan said in an interview on Friday.

The Lucena City Disaster Coordinating Council (LCDCC) prepared a series of month-long activities to heighten public awareness on the value of disaster preparedness, the said.

It will conduct disaster risk management activities and contingency planning workshops in critical spots, while simultaneous earthquake drills will be staged on July 17 and July 28 in all public and private schools and offices, according to Maldabanan.

Executive Order No. 137 designates the month of July as the National Disaster Consciousness Month.

PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD personnel paraphrase a helicopter into Manila Bay in a demonstration of their rescue skills to mark National Disaster Consciousness Month. EDGAR ROMERO

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Pag-Ibig gives delinquent employers time to pay up

DELINQUENT EMPLOYERS HAVE UNTIL the last working day of December this year to register with the Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-Ibig Fund and remit membership contributions and their employer counterpart or face prosecution.

Raffy Cabo-Afiado, Pag-Ibig senior vice president for housing operations, and Nelmin de la Rosa, vice president for management services, said the deadline was set to give employers time to comply with the law.

The two were guests on Saturday on the radio program, "Pera ito, Ibaon," hosted by Blue Revolution Hall of Famer, chair of the Pag-Ibig Board of Trustees and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

De la Rosa said the deadline for registration and payment was part of the fund's "penalty condonation program" for delinquent companies or employers.

He said employers seeking condonation would be required within to pay the unremitted amount plus interest to full or submit a plan of payment within the next three from the filing of their application for condonation.

"Because they had already deducted the contributions and were holding the money of the employees, they must pay the penalties," De la Rosa said.

Matico said he expected many delinquent employers to apply for condonation to avoid being hailed to court after the deadline.

He stressed that Pag-Ibig membership was mandatory under Presidential Decree 1752.

De Castro said that those eligible under the condonation program are employers who are not registered with the Fund, those whose applications for waiver from Fund coverage were denied but who failed to register, and companies registered with the Fund but did not collect employee contribution and did not remit the employer counterpart. Cynthia D. Balana

BPO aims to be RP's biggest

25 YEARS OF SERVICE
Soroptimist International of the Philippines Region (SIPR) Governor Carmen Arsenio Flor (left) toasts the silver jubilee of Soroptimist International of Makati during a celebration held recently. At right is SI Makati president Laling Cenizares. SI Makati was the first Soroptimist Club elevated to the Region's Hall of Fame and the only one cited as Most Outstanding Club for five consecutive years.

A BUSINESS PROCESS outsourcing company has announced plans to employ 10,000 to 15,000 Filipinos in the next three to five years.

"We hope to become the BPO employer of choice for highly skilled Filipinos and to ensure gainful employment for every worker with ample opportunity for professional growth and learning," said Stream Global Services chair and CEO R. Todd Ishaway.

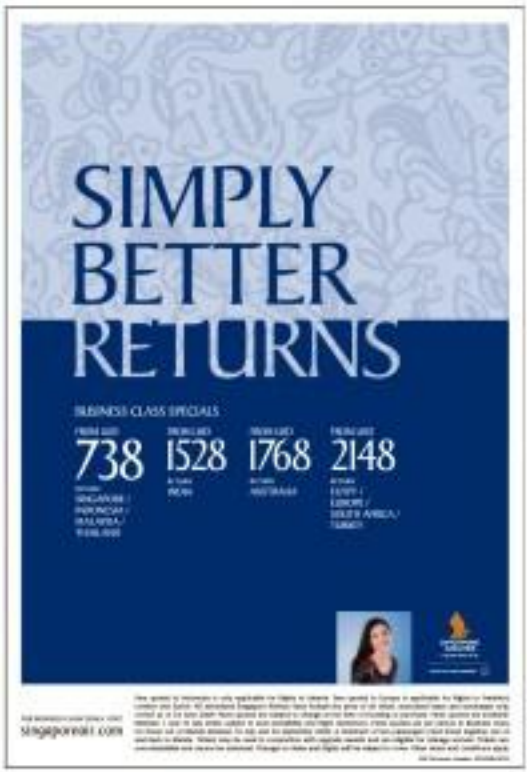
Stream inaugurated recently its second regional center in the Philippines at the newly renovated Ayala Building of SM City North Edsa.

Currently Stream, which began local operations in Makati last year, has 800 employees. Aside for its new 1,400-seat site we're adding at a temporary facility in Eastwood, Quezon City.

Stream has chosen the Philippines for its corporate headquarters in the Asia-Pacific, "where it plans to grow operations in countries like China and Japan while maintaining its presence in India and other parts of the region, Murray said.

"Stream aims to hire ready-to-move-in facilities, technologies and people in the Philippines," he said. Stream would likely launch another concert money before 2010, he added.

The new facility was some $2.5 million to build but total investment, including startup cost equipment, could see close to $20 million by yearend, Murray said.



Don't be lulled by mild form of swine flu, says WHO exec

By Norman Bordados

WHILE MANY INFLUENZA A(H1N1) cases are mild, patients should not be led into complacency. Those who experience difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath, chest pains and severe vomiting should seek emergency medical care, according to World Health Organization officials.

WHO Director General Margaret Chan, in her keynote address before a high-level meeting on the H1N1 virus in Cancun, Mexico, on June 2, said the new disease was not yet fully understood.

"(As) more and more data become available, we are getting a better grip on warning signs that can signal the need for urgent medical care, said Chan. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, chest pains and severe or persistent vomiting."

In adults, a high fever that lasts more than three days, and is also accompanied by a general worsening of the patient's condition, is a warning sign of a more than mild infection.

Lethargy in a child, that is, a child that has difficulty waking up or is no longer alert, or is not playing, is another warning sign, the said.

The speech regarding preparedness and lessons learned in the A(H1N1) or swine flu virus is posted on the WHO website.

Clean and health authorities needed to strike a balance between alarming the public and lulling them into complacency.

Causing alarm over the spread of the new H1N1 virus would result in unnecessary number of persons to seek unneeded help and overburden the health-care systems.

On the other hand, "(if) we are overly reassuring, persons in genuine need of treatment, whose rapid emergency care can make a life-and death difference may be killed into waiting too long," she said.

She said we were now that an overwhelming number of H1N1 patients experience mild symptoms and fully recover within a week, even in the absence of any form of medical treatment.

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Firms urged to brace for next wave

By Jerome Aning

A LABOR GROUP YESTERDAY called on big companies to drum up "contingent business continuity plans" ahead of what the Department of Health has called the "second wave" of the influenza A(H1N1) pandemic.

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) warned that the country could see the number of workers being sequestered over the next few months due to fears that could further threaten the "already frail" national economy.

"This early, we are encouraging firms to find ways to ensure the least possible workplace disruption, before the feared second surge overwhelms us. Workers have to be assured of the least possible stoppage in their jobs and incomes," TUCP secretary general Eusebio Hesiquio said in a statement.

"Our concern here is to protect not just the occupational health and safety of our workers, but also to ensure their gainful employment and livelihood," the former senator said.

The DOH earlier said that it was preparing for a "second wave" of A(H1N1) cases in the country that could involve a more potent strain of the virus similar to the one that has claimed lives abroad. Reports from the agency had said it was possible that the "mild" strain of the H1N1 virus that has spread around the country could evolve and become more virulent.

The TUCP earlier urged the Department of Labor and Employment to compel firms employing more than 100 workers to submit "preparedness plans" to dealing with the spread of H1N1.

DOLE now ensures that businesses establishments, particularly labor-intensive ones, are taking adequate measures to monitor, prevent and control the potential proliferation of the disease among their workforce, warning that the lingering virus, if left unchecked, could severely erode the country's business and impede labor productivity.

'Potter' star infected; Muslim hajj in peril

LONDON—JODIE TED MAUDS, friend one of the main stars in the latest Harry Potter movie, a publicist said Saturday, as new deaths and fears of a carve-up on vaccine access underlined the gravity of the pandemic.

The star from the new "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" premiere in London, actor Rupert Grint, who plays Ron Weasley in the series, was instructed to have taken several days off filming the next installment, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows."

"He has been prescribed and is looking forward to joining his fellow cast members at the junket and premiere this week and will then return to filming directly afterwards," his publicist said in a statement.

With the growing concern in the British capital, the first the second Hajj in November could exacerbate the flu crisis. Tensions decided to suspend lesser pilgrimages to Mecca known as umra.

Tourism Religious Affairs Minister Ibrahim El Akhtoni said officials should "reflect on whether or not to postpone the hajj" this year after taking what he called the "necessary precautions" to suspend umra trips.

Meanwhile, global health bosses warned that intervention of prohibiting could prevent the saving of lives in poor countries.

Reserved for US, Europe

Universal access to a swine flu vaccine remains a "critical question," World Health Organization (WHO) Assistant Director-General Keiji Fukuda said during a summit on the virus in the Mexican beach resort town of Cancun.

Fukuda said guaranteeing that the vaccine would be distributed to underdeveloped nations required "political goodwill."

There are fears that most of the stock that will be produced has already been reserved by the United States and European countries. Infections have increased significantly and can be fatal. Canada announced four new swine flu deaths, bringing its toll to 31, while Thailand raised its total to seven with another two fatalities.

New Zealand also recorded its first deaths linked to swine flu, with authorities reporting Saturday that three people who died in the past week had the virus.

It was "strongly probable" that the Influenza A(H1N1) virus, which causes swine flu, was a major factor in the deaths of two men, aged 19 and 43, although rare lung underlying medical conditions, chief coroner Neil Maxwell-Jones said.

The third death involved a young girl with underlying medical conditions who died Saturday in Wellington Hospital. The regional health board said she had gotten tested positive for swine flu.

98,000 people infected

So far, the virus has infected almost 90,000 people in 123 countries and territories worldwide and caused more than 300 deaths, according to the latest figures released by the WHO.

Macedonia and Syria on Saturday became the latest countries to record their first infected cases.

The weekend developments followed a chilling assessment from British Health Secretary Andy Burnham who said there could be 100,000 infections per day and as many as a hundred deaths in Ireland, Scotland and Wales by the end of August. AFP

GSIS, Pfizer forge partnership

The Power of One - GSIS and Pfizer in Cebu Pfizer Limcolc (L-R) Fran Pfizer - Dr. Anthony Lim-Yuen, Medical and Regulatory Affairs Director and Mr. Albert G. Mateo, Jr., President and Country Manager, Pfizer (GSIS - Wharton Business Unit Senior Manager and Dr. Angel Cunanan, Vice President for Medical Services

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Pfizer, a leading multinational pharmaceutical firm, have forged a partnership that gives more value to the GSIS eCard Plus and provides the 1.5 million members and pensioners of the state pension fund access to Pfizer's Suit Patient Care Program.

With the partnership in place, the power of the GSIS eCard Plus and the complete benefits offered by Pfizer's Suit Patient Care Program are now in one card.

All GSIS eCard holders can now avail of as much as 50% in discount on Pfizer's leading medicines within the month of July when they present their eCard along with their prescription in over 1,000 participating drugstores and pharmacies nationwide.

The program aims to increase benefits being received by GSIS members and pensioners through the GSIS eCard Plus.

This is the first partnership that the GSIS has forged with a pharmaceutical company to increase access to high-quality medicines through Pfizer's Suit Card and the Suit Patient Care Program.

Albert G. Mateo, Jr., Pfizer's President and Country Manager stated, "Pfizer, for the last 161 years, has been helping improve healthcare in the Philippines and this partnership with the GSIS is a manifestation of this continued commitment. We thank the GSIS for allowing us to use their eCard Plus platform to reach this sector of the Filipino population."

"The partnership of the GSIS with Pfizer will help our members and pensioners become healthier, productive individuals."

Pfizer's Suit Patient Care Program is unique in that its approach to healthcare is holistic and comprehensive. It doesn't only offer discounts on high-quality medicines, it also provides relevant health information to patients to help them lead a healthy lifestyle.

"This partnership also signifies the evolution of the GSIS eCard Plus and we are glad to have partnered with Pfizer as we try to add more value to this all-in-one utility card," Garcia adds.

The GSIS is a pioneer in the issuance of multi-purpose cards through its eCard Plus. The GSIS eCard Plus is an all-in-one utility card that combines the functions of an official identification card, a hospitalization discount card, a savings account card, and even a debit card. In VISA-accredited merchant stores, it also functions as an ATM card and can be used in any Electronic Megalink or Expressnet ATMs in the country.

Moreover, pensioners abroad who have an eCard Plus can personally withdraw their monthly pension from any ATM under the VISA PLUS network at the currency of the country they're in.

The Pfizer Suit Patient Care Program, which is now part of the eCard Plus, is the longest-running and most comprehensive patient care program in the Philippines today with over 1.8 million patients who have already benefited from the program around the country. The partnership with GSIS expands the reach of the Program by an additional 1.5 million government employees and pensioners.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, July 6, 2009
14th Week in Ordinary Time
Maria Goretti
1st Reading: Gen 49:1-6b, 33c-50:26
Gospel: Mt 9:18-26

While Jesus was speaking to them, an official of the synagogue came up to him, bowed down before him, and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and place your hands on her, and she will live." Jesus stood up and followed him with his disciples.

Then a woman who had suffered from a severe bleeding for twelve years came up from behind and touched the edge of his cloak. For she thought, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." Jesus turned, and when he saw her he said, "Courage, my daughter, your faith has cured you." And from that moment the woman was healed.

When Jesus arrived at the official's house and saw the flute players and the excited crowd, he said, "Get out of here! The girl is not dead. She is only sleeping!" And they laughed at him. But once the crowd had been ordered out, Jesus went in and took the girl by the hand, and she stood up. The news of this spread throughout the whole area.

Gospel Commentary

Today's reading from Genesis records what may be the world's first known Christian. Joseph's children, it is the custom in America, do not understand during his. Rights from her brothers Esau. According to Jewish tradition, the hidden meaning of the name Joseph is "God will add another son." Before the Messiah people would have to suffer before the coming of the Messiah. In the Christian interpretation, Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament between heaven and earth. The angels, going up and coming down, symbolize the providence of God, by which there is a constant intercourse kept up between heaven and earth.

Christ is our mediator, the Son of the Father on earth. He is the Son of God and Son of Man. He was born in the flesh of Mary. He came to us through Mary. Through Him, the perfect Christ and to people are opportunities to be saved. Jesus' words, "Courage, my daughter, your faith has cured you," are words that are spoken to us. Jesus' power is available to us. Jesus' power is available to us. Jesus' power is available to us.

MANILA WATER SERVICE
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Manila Water will undertake service improvement projects which will cause temporary water supply interruption in the following portions of Mandaluyong, Pasig and Quezon City

Schedule: 11:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 7, 2009 to 6:00 a.m., Wednesday, July 8, 2009.

Affected areas:

Mandaluyong City: Barangay Buayang Bato, Barangka Ibaba, Barangka Itaas, Barangka Ibaba, Barangka Drive, Malaking, Highway Hills and Mauway.

Pasig City: Valle Verde 4, Ortigas Center, Maralco Avenue, Barangays Ugong and Oranbo.

Quezon City: Corinthian Subdivision and Arcadia Subdivision.

Manila Water Company is advising all residents of the said areas to store enough water to supply their needs during the interruption period.

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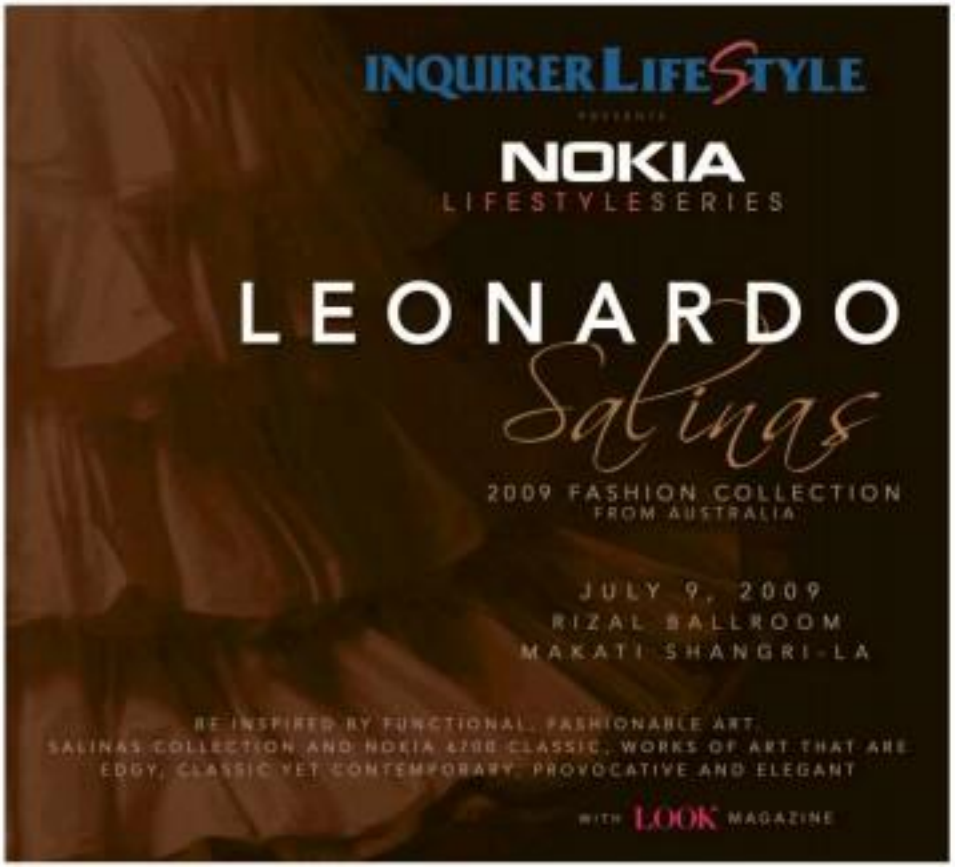
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WITH LOOK MAGAZINE

Beleaguered OFWs in Libya seek RP gov't help

By Jerome Aning

AN ALLIANCE OF FILIPINO FREEDOM workers' organizations based in the Middle East yesterday called on the government to help 121 OFWs in Libya who have accused their employer of illegally monitoring their work site and making them sign new contracts that reduced their wages.

Migrante-Middle East said the Filipinos, mostly construction workers, were deployed to the eastern port city of Benghazi by Abraham Construction Co.

John Leonard Monterona, Migrante-ME regional coordinator, said the employer forced the OFWs to sign new contracts whose salary provisions differed from the contracts they signed in the Philippines.

Monterona said the OFWs were given a flat rate salary of 250 Libyan dinars (about $122) each per month, instead of the $400 by a skilled worker in $700 for a foreman, as promised by their recruiter, Filipino Management Corp. Philippines. The $1 dollar is roughly equivalent to 1.25 Libyan dinars.

"We have called our agency in the Philippines but they can't do anything. We don't want our situation to get more problematic by their inaction. We also want Libya to continue being a safe destination for OFWs. We want to see if we could still help our promise to give a better life to our families," the OFW said in an eight-page letter, a copy of which was provided to the Inquirer by Monterona.

Poor conditions

The OFWs were originally hired by a Tripoli-based firm to work for its Ras Tajshir project in the Libyan capital. Tripoli is 1,000 miles southwest of Benghazi, a thousand kilometers from Egypt.

The OFWs, in their letter to Migrante-ME dated June 15, also complained that they were given no overtime pay placed in unsanitary accommodations, and experienced working conditions without safety equipment and health care.

"They said they don't have accompanying nurse or medical staff to look after their health and that some of the workers who go to their sick rooms had expired," Monterona added, adding that some are confined in the toilets.

Sick companions

"Some of their sick companions were forced to seek help from the local Filipino community by medical care and attendance, which their company failed to provide," Monterona said.

The OFWs cited the case of a worker who was confined at a hospital in Benghazi and was called once by a nurse who worked for the Philippine Embassy. At least nine of their colleagues are worn, unable to bear the poor working conditions, they said.

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Immigration agents face charges

By Marlon Ramos

TWO IMMIGRATION officers were named on a 90-day suspension for allegedly extorting P2,000 from a Thai passenger at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 in June.

Gilbert Gervacio and Rinaldo Mabasa may also be dismissed from government service if they are found guilty of illegally collecting money from passengers passing through the Bureau of Immigration counter, according to acting Immigration Commissioner Linda Ong.

Ong said Gervacio and Mabasa were also charged with grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

Gervacio and Mabasa were not available for comment.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. filed the complaint against the two officers last week.

Pichay said the two officers demanded P2,000 from her.

Where she asked what the money was for, she said, she was told to hand it over to avoid being detained by immigration officials.

Pichay said she was outraged by the incident.

"Is it a way for immigration officers to solicit money from passengers?" she said.

The next day, she said, she gave her passport to another man behind the adjacent immigration counter, who then put the money on a shelf and returned her travel papers.

Pichay returned to Manila on June 25 with her husband, Teodoro Reiss, and sought Sotto's assistance.

Reiss identified Gervacio as the man who demanded money from her, and Mabasa as the one who put the cash on a shelf.

Feijoo commercial manager for his guest echoes, saying the evening Rj-person and were "a disgrace to our country."

"They're not helping the government service more foreign tourists to come to the country," Feijoo said in a phone interview.

Gervacio and Mabasa were not available for comment.

Surigal said three had been two previous complaints against the same officers but charges were dropped because the complainant did not attend hearings. The two remained at their airport posts.

N. Zealand recruiter faces raps in Manila

THE MANILA CITY prosecutor has recommended the filing of charges in court against a New Zealander who allegedly lured several jobseekers to nonexistent jobs abroad two years ago.

Prosecutor Zhenny Lopez recommended that respondent Sheila Brown, of 2GB International Travel Consultant Management Services, be charged with large-scale illegal recruitment and seven counts of estafa in the Manila Regional Trial Court.

The charges stemmed from a complaint filed by Arvel Bernardo, Saturnino Pesos, Howard Bermudez, Rosalie Gotoc, Jose Malling, Rose Marie Rivera, and Jewel Salvador.

The complainants alleged that sometime between July and August 2007, Brown received them with jobs in New Zealand as fruit pickers.

The report demanded P120,000 from each of them in processing and placement fees, the complainants said, adding that the suspect received a total of P120,000 from them.

Upon receipt of the money, the suspect promised to send the complainants abroad within two months. However, the promised overseas jobs did not materialize.

Investigation made with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) showed that 2GB International was not licensed by the agency to recruit workers for overseas employment.

According to Lopez, Brown was empowered and obligated by salvador (Brown) took their money under the pretext of sending them abroad," Lopez said. Pino 6; Ramos

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Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

Annual Report

July 2008-June 2009

In these trying times, our people look to their leaders to strengthen our country's precarious state of democracy, justice and peace, as well as to advocate reforms for sustainable and equitable growth. But, as mentioned time and again, any illusions of change are simply not possible under the Administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Sadly, it is within this context that I present my past year's accomplishments as a Senator of the Republic.

Last year, I filed 158 bills and resolutions that cover various advocacies such as: poverty alleviation; good governance; affordable and accessible health care; national defense and security; and environmental protection. This year, I humbly report that I have filed 168 more bills and resolutions with the faint hope that we would be able to institutionalize policies and long-term programs through legislation.

More than legislation, however, I continue to be a voice of defiance against a regime that is reputed as the most corrupt in our nation's history. This, I can honestly say, is my small contribution to our people's incessant struggle for change.

Finally, despite the limitations of being incarcerated, I will keep on serving my country and people in whatever way I can.

May God bless us all.

Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

Bills Authored

Antonio F. Trillanes IV, a first-term Senator who continues to serve the Filipino people from his jail cell, has become one of the leading legislators in the country.

In 2008 he ranked second in number of bills filed, according to the Bills and Index Division of the Philippine Senate. Elected only in 2007, to date he has authored 285 bills and 21 resolutions while still incarcerated at the Camp Crame Custodial Center for rebellion charges.

His early and enduring campaign against corruption also prefigured the current and collective clamor for accountability in the Arroyo administration.

More than individual achievement, the Filipinos come first for Senator Trillanes. An advocate of reforms in governance, his accomplished leadership is inspired by his hope and vision for an empowered nation.

285

Bills Filed (Standard and Joint Resolutions)

21

Resolutions and Joint Resolutions

BILLS PASSED IN THE LOWER HOUSE

BILLS PASSED BY THE SENATE

BILLS PENDING IN THE SENATE

ANTI-POVERTY

GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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INQUIRER VOL. 29 NO. 209

OPINION

Climate justice

IT IS A USEFUL CONCEPT, AND TO KOFI ANNAN, the former secretary-general of the United Nations, must go the credit for popularizing it. Sen. Loren Legarda also deserves approbation, for bringing the issue, in this new, evocative phrasing, to the Philippines' attention. But while "climate justice" may have its uses, it also has its limitations.

EDITORIALS

Annan's Global Alliance for Climate Justice is essentially a worldwide pressure group based on the "polluter pays" principle; in this case, the polluters are the large industrialized countries, who account historically for an overwhelming share of greenhouse gas emissions—according to scientific consensus, the primary engine of global warming. Climate justice seeks to hold the developed economies to account, and to play a proportionate role in the global effort to lessen greenhouse gas emissions.

The perspective of the developing economies is summed up in Legarda's statement: "It is a clear injustice that these groups [the poorest in the world] suffer the brunt of the impacts of climate change without any responsibility for having caused it."

Perhaps "any" is too broad; it is difficult to pinpoint any sizable group of people in the world who do not leave a "carbon footprint," but the larger point is surely accurate: The poorest people, who do not use air-conditioners or travel by jet, are the most left most vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change.

"Those most vulnerable to climate change today are the world's poorest groups, since they lack the resources and means to cope with its impacts," Legarda, who was recently named by the United Nations as a "regional champion for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation," said after meeting with Annan in the Global Humanitarian Forum in Geneva two months ago. From Geneva, Legarda rushed to a press statement that "99% of the casualties due to climate change occur in developing countries but 80% of the world's least developed nations account for less than 1% of greenhouse emissions."

The issue is complicated by historical factors: China, for instance, is a leading user of coal power plants, the dirtiest source of energy; the nonetheless of its rapid economic growth over the last 30 years all but ensures that China will continue to consume extraordinary quantities of coal in the next couple of decades. And yet, despite this disturbing trend, historically China will have contributed much less greenhouse gas by 2030 than, say, Britain since the Industrial Revolution.

Will climate justice, as Annan's alliance understands it, calibrate the ecological scales in such a way as to accept such nuances?

Here we see the limitations of this useful, unified necessary approach. The main thrust of operation in the climate change wars, if we may borrow the language of the military, is the commanding heights of public opinion in the developed economies. Public behavior in the United States, for instance, is a key determinant of the success of any new climate change framework; will millions of Americans opt to buy greener cars, or forgo buying cars altogether? Will millions of American households, so used to the conveniences of modern life, opt to change to an alternative, more difficult but less-energy-intensive lifestyle? The answers will be shaped by American public opinion, responding in part to governance initiatives, private-sector innovations and greater awareness of the ecological costs of development.

Is "climate justice" the best way to engage public opinion in the industrialized countries? Annan's concept allows countries at great risk of climate change, including the Philippines, to band together and work as one to pressuring developed economies. But perhaps the best way to engage public opinion in those same developed economies would not be in terms of "justice"—it would be difficult enough to consider adopting an alternative way of life without taking the concerns of other people in other countries into account—but in terms of reason, of economic good, of enlightened self-interest.

Boob job

WE DO NOT WISH TO COMMENT ON PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo's breast implants from many years ago, and their reported removal and replacement; that is a private matter. But Press Secretary Cerge Remonde's issue and breast-denials before checking the facts demonstrate, yet again, the folly of spokespeakship in the Arroyo administration. It is a job for boobs.

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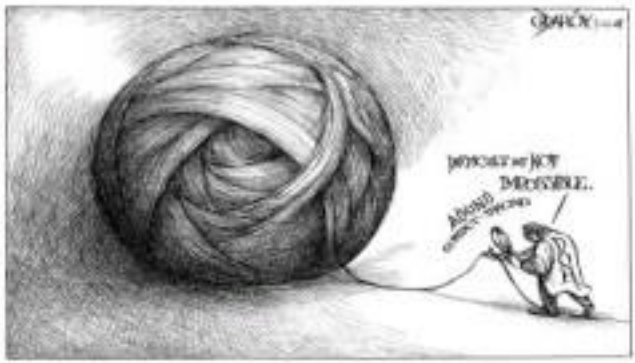

GMA always presents a false front

FILIPINO COMEDY HAS JUST BARELY CLEARED rolling about Sandra Aho and his sex videos and shifted to the breast implants of President Macapagal-Arroyo. "What's wrong with the President having had breast implants?" Press Secretary Cerge Remonde asked a day after denying GMA had undergone breast implants.

Answer: Nothing. So why did Malacañang have to lie about it initially?

The issue is not that GMA had a breast implant (not that they have to lie about such a simple matter. If you will recall, the Palace announced that the President checked into the Asian Hospital for self-quarantine after arriving from another of her innumerable trips abroad. Her pals, it was to have a "leaking breast implant" and a lump in the groin (added, too). And a day after that report came out, Remonde says all were the media dreaming it, even showing photographs of a Pre-Aho-Sandra GMA in a bikini and asking: "Does that look like she had a breast implant?" Before the day was over, a red-faced Remonde had to make an about-face when the Palace itself, realizing that hospitals and clinics have medical records, admitted that, yes, GMA had breast implants almost 20 years ago.

Not flattering. It was not his fault that he was caught telling a lie. The Office of the Press Adviser told him that the implant rare was false. The President had lied twice to her own press secretary.

Remonde's plight reminds me of a similar plight of then Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye during the "Hello Garci" scandal. Bunye had triumphantly appeared on television with tapes of the conversation between Abalos and Garci and said they were "fake." Only they were genuine and Bunye was forced to present again another set of tapes. That is the trouble with telling lies: you are caught in the web of your own lies.

But telling lies is common practice in Gloria Malacañang. Remember when she promised she would not run for President again. Then she ran only on condition that the election returns fortunately the Al Ignig is put for the course in Malacañang. Because, as we have seen, the term.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

point always wants to put up a false front.

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has ordered cellphone companies to tackle the life-or-cellphone heads if they are not used. That's not enough. Even if you lengthen them to 30 times the present registration times, they are still useful to the customers. There should be no expiration. They are already paid in advance. Why make them expire if they are not used?

That is why voter lists are not integrated. Consumers can their loads at the same time before they expire even if they have no important messages to input. Lists are accumulated that some messages are received, the next day or not at all.

Telcos should encourage their subscribers to use their units sparingly so as not to clog the airwaves. Instead they encourage them to exhaust their loads so they would have to load again. That is greed!

Some cellphone owners load their units for emergencies. But if the loads have expiration dates, they would be wasting their money. It is as if the telcos are stealing the money of cellphone owners.

The NTC should outlaw the expiration of loads. If the NTC refuses to do its duty of protecting the public, Congress should pass a law outlawing it, and another law abolishing the NTC.

• • •

Isn't it ironic that while President Cristina Aquino is fighting for her life in a hospital in Manila, Mayor Lim is still weak, still fanning her wealth—in a hotel ballroom no less? We have our priorities backwards. Cory. If it had not been for her, we would still be under the heel of Imelda, bowing to her and singing her praises like the sycophants that the high society elite are. It was Cory that ignited People Power I that drove the Marcoses from the Palace. Now she is battling cancer in a hospital while the landslide dances and sings and drinks and eats with high society in a five-star hotel only a few blocks away.

After two score years, the Presidential Commission on Government (PCGG) has not succeeded in confiscating her fabulous jewelry collection and other assets that belong to the Filipino people. Imelda claims them it is because there are no documents to prove that they belong to the State. But there are no documents to prove that they legally belong to Imelda either.

It is not because Imelda is innocent. It is because the PCGG is incompetent. It is because PCGG officials and fiscal agents get their pay from sequestered companies, so that there is no incentive for them to finish the court cases. The longer the cases are unresolved, the longer they stay on the payroll.

A succession of PCGG commissioners was more interested in striking a compromise with the Marcoses than in having the assets confiscated.

The Unexplained Wealth Law is very clear. The accused has to explain satisfactorily how he acquired his wealth. Failing that, the wealth is assumed ill-gotten and is forfeited to the government. The State does not have to prove anything. That is why the law is called the Unexplained Wealth Law. The framers realize that thieves in the government cannot be many steps in front of the law and the difficulty of locating documents that would incriminate them. So they passed the Unexplained Wealth Law, which provides that if a public official's wealth is out of proportion to his legal income and he cannot explain how he got them legally, it is assumed ill-gotten.

It is time that public officials are to read and that if they do, they cannot get away with it. But they would be caught even sooner.

Jokes

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

GLAD TO BE BACK. HATE TO BE BACK. GLAD to be back because this is home, there is no back because everything looks more benign here than elsewhere.

As I write this, my favorite newspaper has just reported that automated elections are on again. This is the latest, but probably not the last, chapter in a continuing saga that rivals the local soap. Starring all the stars of a shotgun marriage. Till one of someone's have appeared. Starring all the stars of a shotgun marriage. Till one of someone's have appeared. Starring all the stars of a shotgun marriage. Till one of someone's have appeared. Starring all the stars of a shotgun marriage. Till one of someone's have appeared.

As I write this, my favorite newspaper has just reported that automated elections are on again. This is the latest, but probably not the last, chapter in a continuing saga that rivals the local soap

A constitutional convention in 2010?

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE MOVEMENT TOWARD CHARTER CHANGE refuses to die in the hands of unrepentant power holders. The senators, however, find the motivation of Charter change advocates to be self-serving. Hence the opposition of Charter change are unifying in their campaign to frustrate the ambition of many members of the House. What triggered the senators' unrelenting opposition against Charter change was the midnight move last June 2 to convene Congress as a constituent assembly.

The campaign against Charter change now is projected and is seen as a campaign to dramatize HR 1109. In one sense, however, targeting HR 1109 is a pointless exercise. Heck or whoever it, Congress can already initiate changes because the Constitution has already made Congress a constituent assembly by saying that "any amendment to or revision of the Constitution may be proposed by Congress," the Constitution has already made Congress a constituent assembly long before HR 1109.

In another and more accurate sense, however, the campaign against HR 1109 is really a campaign against allowing the current crop of members of the House of Representatives to take the lead in moves to monopolize the task of effecting constitutional changes. In this sense I strongly support the campaign.

Whether we like it or not, constitutional change is bound to happen. It will not happen before the 2010 elections. There simply is no more time for that. But sometime after the 2010 elections it is bound to happen. Does anybody disagree?

Constitutional change can be either amendment or revision. An amendment is a minor change in the Constitution that does not affect the fundamental structure of the system or affects only one or two provisions of the existing Constitution. A revision, however, involves a broader reexamination of the total document with a view to changing its basic structure or changing some of its philosophical underpinnings. From the sense of surveys the sentiment is clear to me that what is being envisioned is a revision—an examination of the entirety prohibited system, of fundamentals, of economic nationalism, etc. If we are to embark on this enterprise, what is needed is not openCon the current crop of Congressmen because we want a fair and careful deliberation in an atmosphere of normal respect. If we have to have it, one crucial question to ask is: How should changes be made?

Under our system unless changes can be achieved through initiative and referendum, or through Congress as a constituent assembly, or through a constitutional convention. The method of initiative and referendum, however, is out. This novel method is allowed by the Constitution only for amendments and not for revision. Thus we are left with a choice between Congress as a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention.

Theoretically both Congress as a constituent assembly and a constitutional convention have the authority to formulate and propose both minor and major changes. But there are important differences between the two which must be considered when deciding which method to follow. In terms of cost, using a constituent assembly is less expensive than resorting to a constitutional convention. Supporting a constitutional convention would be equivalent to supporting a second and perhaps larger legislative body. However, Congress, aside from not having been elected for the purpose of revising the Constitution, consists of people who currently hold political power and are not likely to be inclined to make changes that can diminish their power.

A constitutional convention, on the other hand, consists of members chosen by the sovereign people precisely for the purpose of reviewing the existing constitution. The constitutional convention law which will prescribe the manner of electing or appointing the delegates and the qualifications needed for membership can set parameters which can assure, to the extent possible, the election of the delegates will not be with wisdom, independence and unselfish concern for the welfare of the nation. Indeed, delegates might already harbor in their hearts the ambition to hold office under the new constitution, but their relation to public office is more remote than when members of Congress already have.

Besides, Mr. Chairman, if the Honorable Senator Congress as a constituent assembly and a constitutional convention, I would suggest that if the intent is a radical revision in the constitutional structure (as I can sense it is), surely as a shift to a unicameral parliamentary form of government, the task of evaluating or formulating the details of such a change should be entrusted to a constitutional convention. Minor changes, and even important changes but which do not involve a radical change in the structure of government, can be wrought through Congress as a constituent assembly. But this is not the kind of changes we are here to be done in one full swoop. They can be attended to gradually over the years.

Should we then embark on a constitutional convention?

We must face the reality that a large segment of the population, rightly or wrongly, has been conditioned to expect constitutional reform soon. This cannot be ignored. It can, however, be dealt with through the constitutional provision which authorizes Congress to propose the question to the people themselves in a plebiscite for the purpose. The Constitution says: "The Congress may..."

In a majority vote, submit to the electorate the question of calling such a constitutional convention." This question can be proposed to the electorate in the May 2010 elections.

Le Roi

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

ally accepted).

Death is a reality that most always put us in contemplation. And Michael Jackson's is no exception. What should his death move us to? The answers are normally not clothed by the one that he was on stage, whose business is confined to a source of lights and sounds that only provide a limited glimpse of what artists are in the privacy of their souls. Out of stage, Jackson was a reminder of soul.

His obsession with the childhood that existed only in his reverie, epitomized by a Neverland that indeed only fantasy could weave, was at the core of that turmoil. Jackson had revealed once in an interview that the child prodigy that he was never had a normal childhood. The innocence of that childhood was overtaken by considerations extraneous for the Jackson 5, stage managed by a domineering father who hustled for the visions of the prosperity gospel for his family.

The child prodigy was a victim of child abuse by that same father who did not spare physical punishment and who once had castigated him, saying his nose was ugly. Knowing that now, the surgical alteration of a face that later morphed in to a look alike of his bosom friend Diana Ross gives us a better perspective of Michael Jackson's tortured existence. Compensating for the childhood that eluded him became a constant theme that he would weave into his business.

Jackson became an increasingly freakish figure," one Western media opinion writer said. "A man-child secretly out of touch with grown-up life. His skin became lighter, his nose narrower, and he spoke in a breathy, girlish voice. He surrounded himself with children at his Neverland ranch, often water a game mask while traveling with strangers or companions named Bubbles as one of his closest companions."

"It is as if by was defying gravity," recalled a Hollywood publicist, "a man whose internal essence was at war with the norms of the world."

Transcending childhood reminiscences is one's ear to the ground. Some 3 months ago, I predicted for many for us all have our wonderdrugs. But we found it too much. And having done so, there lies our victory over the reign of life. For the opposite is the decline of the human being.

Shedding here who listen at the inner sight of Michael Jackson's soul, we owe them his mind. For he had become a god whose immutability we all thought will never be part of the script. And suddenly one day he does not wake up from his insomniac's sleep. Google gets a headline of re-constructing the news. Memories of formality's are overtaken by the news. "It's like when Kennedy was assassinated. I still always remember being in Home Room when Michael Jackson died," voice one grieving fan.

We remember the hours. "In a world filled with hate, we must still dare to hope. In a world filled with despair, we must still dare to wonder. In a world filled with doubt, we must still dare to dream. And in a world filled with distrust, we must still dare to believe."

Notebook is a real illusion of the real humanity beneath the mass. In death, for the real Michael Jackson reaches the moment Michael Jackson that we have bestowed him to be. Let it prompt an ongoing ed of forever prayers for his soul. Let the "mercy of Christ be his best chance to 'never die,' not his best selling record."

Le roi est mort. Vive le roi.

Comments to montalvan.rako.ark.ph

The Marcos restoration

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

SATURDAY'S GLOWING COVERAGE IN THIS newspaper of Wisdom Imelda Romualdez Marcos' birthday—her 80th—and the Marcos family reunion, reminiscing the Snap Election and People Power origins of this paper. That question is: wasn't the proliferation of glowing media coverage a sign that the hostile for history has been written by Ferdinand Marcos' victors?

For their media to me no better proof that the rehabilitation of the couple to now complete: the flashy, cooing front-page lifestyle-style story was devoid of reproach, as was Mr. Bush's praise to Madame as a stroke of the interim application of Marcos. What, then, remains, of Ferdinand Marcos' political mess has been laid to rest, their political reputation, at last, complete, and with it, their political and historical vindication finally achieved.

Ms. Marcos has been winning cases in court, and in 1995 she served as congressional district for her home province of Ilocos Norte before taking over representing her husband's district in Ilocos Norte and being chief executive of the province, and one of her grandsons became a billboard star. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is said to be poised to make a bid for the senate in 2010 on the ticket of the Nacionalista Party. As the old Filipino saying goes, "Everything is coming up roses."

A friend in his late 20s recently made a comment that does not augur well for the future: "You have to realize that for my generation [multiple] generations of children we don't see but the same oldies people do."

I first got an inkling of this a few years ago, when Mr. Marcos deftly filed an injunction to prevent the showing of Ramona Diaz's documentary "Imelda," which only affected the public's appetite for it. Ironically, the publicity that Diaz helped up when it was finally allowed to be shown. The documentary was unremarkably, to be sure: a magnificent PR piece because it presented her as an eccentric but essentially charming personality incapable of inconsistency.

Similarly, Imelda's unwilling running for national office told me the other night that he'd in fact asked someone a survey if the Marcoses mattered, politically and the answer was no—for those 40 years old and below, who incidentally comprise the overwhelming majority of the electorate. The Marcoses are a negative factor, the politician added, for those who are indifferent—but they only sometimes about a third of voters.

And so, for Mr. Marcos or her children, the dead are of her husband save the public imagination, which once loomed so large in a sinister way can be said to be benefiting from a kind of nostalgia for the 1970s. A simpler, more innocent time, when one only got more political newspaper.

Of course the rehabilitation of the Marcoses, while the advanced socially, has been going on for some time, politically.

Indeed, 1987's Senator Edwardo Cojuangco Jr. could have won the presidency in 1992 if Ms. Marcos hadn't split the Lakas vote in that election. Her taking 8 percent of the vote was enough to deny Cojuangco victory. In 1998, with Joseph Estrada, himself a beneficiary of martial law, the Estrada political machine in large part was built on the remnants of the old Marcos machine and he was succeeded in many respects by the senior faces of the leadership of the New Society.

Arguably, the greatest act of rehabilitation is in evidence: the lifting of specific personalities or the great causes of a particular era seems to compress about a generation.

For 20 years the Subordinate, after they made the initial political mistake of advocating martial law, remained in disgrace. Only after Cory died after adopted a more cautious approach to the inevitability of independence, drained themselves to a slow but inevitable slide toward political extinction—even when they tried reinventing themselves as the Democratic Alliance.

The Democratic dumbed in 2011 with their leadership realigned with the Anti-Estrada-Fidel-Gutting faction of the Nacionalistas. It is would let unless the remnants of the formerly monolithic UNIDO decided to go it alone, or suffered life first in DAR, first the revived Nacionalistas and then the NPC itself a faction of the NP).

Just as, in the first two decades of the postwar era, the question of collaboration was a potent weapon in political campaigns, so did the issue of the dictatorship and martial law fade in importance by years after martial law. The epidemical focus of Edsa from time in time resulted in opposition to the Marcoses, though from their return the old bailiwicks of Ilocos and Leyte returned the Marcoses and Romualdezes in power with unusual consistency.

The appeal, then, of Edsa in 1986, has dissipated, as far as its being able to summon political participation for or against an issue or candidate, among the young, for those who actually lived through martial law, it remains a memory, or suffered it in hands, or who simply believed it had suffered its potential and turned, instead, into an albatross around the neck of the country. It is next to impossible to imagine any issue to summon the same kind of response that—whatever the feelings—the Marcoses—it does now.

So it is that every generation passes and with its passing, its memories and feelings are lost, and so it must be that we are, at long last, truly entering the post Marcos era. In which case the glowing coverage of Ms Marcos' birthday celebration was less something to be outraged about, and instead, simply something to take notice of a signpost of how the times have changed, as they must.

And it is, for us, simply to take notice of such things, to observe them, to make them, and by so doing, order to what is, and no longer what once was.

'Winning the Peace'—stranger than fiction

LAST MAY, PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA FIRED THE TOP US commander in Afghanistan, Gen. David McKiernan, and replaced him with Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal. It was the first firing of a senior commander by the President of the United States since Harry Truman fired Gen. Douglas MacArthur as far East commander in April 1951 for insubordination.

According to an article by Fred Kaplan, Defense Secretary Robert Gates had asked for McKiernan's removal. "When a Cabinet officer asks for the resignation of a subordinate, it means that he's fitting the pan" Kaplan wrote. "Gates spoke of McChrystal's "unique skills in counter-insurgency" and the need for "new eyes on the ground." For five years, McChrystal was commander of the Joint Special Operations Command, a highly secretive operation hunting down and killing al-Qaeda elements. Gates often mentioned the importance of Gen. David Petraeus to deputy commanders in Afghanistan, a newly created post.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

Today a debate of sorts is being waged in US Army circles between an "old guard" that thinks in terms of conventional forces, and a "new guard" that focuses on asymmetrical conflict and counter-insurgency.

Most observers agree that the war in Afghanistan was in need of reform. The most serious problem had been the lack of clarity in terms of a clearly defined purpose along with a clear definition of victory. Last Friday, 4,000 US Marines launched Operation Khanjar against the Taliban in Helmand Province. It was the biggest offensive by Marine units since the Vietnam War.

* * *

Here in the Philippines, the month of May saw another change of command ceremony involving the highest levels of the Armed Forces. AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Alexander Yano and Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana were relieved from their jobs after less than a year in office with a few months to go before reaching their official retirement dates. General Yano was replaced by Gen. Victor Ibrado who retires in about 11 months, unless sooner terminated. General Cardoso was replaced by Lt. Gen. Rodrigo Maclang who retires from service in June 2010.

Absolutely no reasons were given for the relief of both officers. There were no explanations from the defense department or from Malacañang on why they were being retired prematurely. Was it for incompetence, for insubordination, for lackluster performance? Certainly, the men and women of the AFP are entitled to some clarification. To me, the PR-type silence we are used to whenever sophomoric-at-so why the highest ranking officers in the AFP are suddenly retired and moved out to foreign assignments. Incidentally, both generals have not been able to proceed to their foreign posts in the absence of the usual notice of agreement by the receiving countries.

There are questions that call for answers from our leaders if they expect the chain of command to follow orders. Our officers and men may oppose silent. But in their hearts, they know what is happening. Do not mistake their silence for acquiescence.

* * *

During the last few days in June, a spate of full-page red and white mysterious came out in the major newspapers. One was titled "Rides for Progress"... Byudet ng Pangulo, Palasyo nag ng Bayan. Alongside this advertisement was another almost full-page layout on "Winning the Peace," a report on the war against communist insurgency. It showed CPP/NPA strength down to 5,000 guerrillas from the 25,000 down to 70. Maj. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu, CG, 10th Infantry Division, is quoted as saying, "the CPP/NPA is losing in every front. Losing their mass support in the barangays, struggling with armies from within..." Somehow I am reminded of Vietnam war statistics which tallied body counts and dismantled bunkers. In the Philippines, the enemy is usually identified as rubber stockade and moving on bicycles were able to defeat two technologically superior Western powers.

In addition to the almost full-page ad on the flight against the communist terrorists, a smaller, one-fourth page advertisement also appeared in the Philippine Star Sunday, June 28, 2009 with headlines in the nature of a report on the surrender of the insurgency by 2010 ... We are thinking of changing our parameters for demanding guerrilla fronts because of the continuing existence of armed groups even if the political and military structures are dismantled. They are just small groups of bandits and not considered guerrilla fronts." (Philippine Star, Monday, June 22, 2009, at page 8-20). This is exactly what I was saying in an earlier column on the subject of dismantled guerrilla fronts.

In the ad on "Winning the Peace," no mention is made about the problems we face in Mindanao against the MILF and the other Moro fronts. The AFP chief of staff and the AFP last year said in the last 18 months. This suspected figure is obviously part of the propaganda war but there can be no doubt that we continue to lose more soldiers in the war against the MILF than against the CPP/NPA. We have not been able to secure the release of Red Cross hostage Eugenio Vagni in the face of continuing pressure from the International community. Similarly, we have not been able to secure the release of two Jordanians and Ten Filipinos, who were responsible for widespread death and destruction in North Cotabato and Lanao del Sur.

How many teachers and ordinary workers have been kidnapped and ransom in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, making the government of Haddad Jakarta look like a model of determination to be used to secure their safe release. It would appear that we are more sensitive about foreign hostages than the safety of our own people. The protection of all its citizens remains a basic responsibility of any government.

How can the talk of "Winning the Peace" when our casualties continue to mount in the fight against MILF and Abu Sayyaf elements? There is no peace in our land, and here we mean the entire nation. There is no clarity of purpose of government, and no definition of what constitutes victory. Unfortunately, we are already in the midst of a political campaign. Until victory is clearly emerges, we should merely wait the through one term after another.

* * *

Retired brig. Gen. Romeo Isreal informs me that he has had print to send a P 0.1 Blessing in the PMI Darfil was part of the Class of 1959 Commencement that made it to the end of the Morning era. The other members of the vanguard are Lts. Wenceslo Alejado, Rolando Dionisio and Aristotle Lalusan.

GMA addicted to foreign travel

THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO Japan and Brunei from June 17 to 25 has her battered her growing reputation as presidential globe-trotter uncaught. She or her Malacañang spinners on offer various justifications or reasons for her presidential junket.

In her departure statement to her Isikol Japan visit, President Macapagal-Arroyo said, "My talks with senior Japanese government officials will focus on how we can further enhance the international mechanisms geared by North Korea." The blind and uncouth statement will not sit well with Pyongyang which has foreign secretary officially visited for year. Why not send her foreign secretary to Tokyo to obtain the Japanese view on North Korean intransigence when this could be done for less by the Philippine ambassador to Japan Sposito Japanese) in that place? Also, does she see

[illegible] in are really that productive and beneficial, then President Arroyo's own 30 foreign travels so far should have the Philippines in better economic status rather than limp, lag and financially strapped, and constantly struggling to keep our heads above water.

More often than not, the size and composition of our presidential entourage serves as a source of embarrassment. While Singapore or any other first-class country does it abundantly to the point of addiction. Given our dire financial circumstances, it is high time that an in-depth assessment be made of Philippine presidential foreign trips. There are many questions that beg for answers.

For instance, the press secretary quantitatively the media that the recent visit of President Arroyo to Japan and South Korea would generate over $1 billion worth of investments, loans, etc. If foreign visits the convenient on the same issue to Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo or the assessment by our ambassador to Seoul and our ambassador to Beijing, regarding South Korea? Why does President Arroyo make our diplomats dispensable or inutile?

Foreign visits have become an obsession for Filipino presidents. Former President Fidel V. Ramos made 32 foreign trips during his six-year term. But President Arroyo does it obsessively to the point of addiction. Given our dire financial circumstances, it is high time that an in-depth assessment be made of Philippine presidential foreign trips. There are many questions that beg for answers.

For instance, the press secretary quantitatively the media that the recent visit of President Arroyo to Japan and South Korea would generate over $1 billion worth of investments, loans, etc. If foreign visits

[illegible] much the culpable MPs from the Speaker of the House (reprimand to our Member Property Inspector) was forced out of office on a "motion of no confidence" motivated by her peers, four Cabinet secretaries resigned, others retired early, or are not running for re-election, or were expelled from their parties. Some MPs paid income back, including PM Gordon Brown; others paid taxes previously avoided. And what's paid to the Bascule taxpayers. The MPs mostly belong to the two main political parties—Labour and Conservative—but most of the blameworthy belong to Labour, the party in power.

It is within our reach to put a stop to extravagant and grasping greed. Nobody is above the law. The British government has set the police to investigate possible illegal acts by the MPs. And you know what? If found guilty, they are put behind bars, and stay there, till their prison time is up.

—ELEANOR PLAYOFAIR
peter_pupils@yahoo.co.uk

Best way to teach kids—by example

I WISH TO COMMEND COMTD. Dulce Christine E. Lawsing for writing the enlightening article "Believing by example" in the June 17 issue of the Lifestyle section.

As a parent myself, I truly agree that the only effective way to teach children is by example. I would like to add that parents (your dues should be their children's best friends, properly guiding their youngsters who live in permissive times, what with all the pornography or pornosaurus, not shown in the various media such as print, film, TV or Internet.

Apart from censoring the things children view on TV programs, I believe, should also teach their adolescent kids to discern a program, like taking note of what is right and what seems wrong about it. In that way the young ones learn to evaluate material based on good values or morals. They also develop good taste when it comes to TV programming.

I also agree with Lawsing that parents should learn to assign household chores to their children for them to be more responsible. And yes, I agree that parents should develop in their kids good reading habits for these to be diverted from the idiot box. I had it to me just before. It is developing good taste in reading materials with intellectual appeal and sound values.)

Indeed, for parents to earn their children's respect, they must keep the communication lines open, always ready to listen to their kids' intimate thoughts and desires. A healthy relationship, I believe, is founded on sincerity and a deep sense of trust. And when this exists, the young ones can rest for achievers and prime movers of a united society.

And, as Lawsing stressed, peace is what makes for healthy and happy living. It is what solves any problem.

—CESARIO MARASIGAN MONTECILLO
montecillo@yahoo.com

Interpol: DNA tests accurate, reliable

FOLLOWING MEDIA COVERAGE of the first anniversary of the trial-testing of the MV Princess of the Stars on June 21, 2008, we feel it is important to correct misleading reports on the DNA-assisted victim identification work undertaken by Interpol and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP).

Due to the complexity and scale of the disaster in which more than 800 died, a multi-pronged victim identification approach with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) was activated within days to provide vital assistance in identifying the victims as accurately and quickly as possible. What was clear from the outset was the necessity of assisting DNA testing as part of the Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) efforts.

We were disappointed to read statements attributed to Public Attorney's Office chief Persida Rueda-Acosta falsely suggesting that DNA identification is unreliable when in fact from reliable scientific evidence and the experience of Interpol, the ICMP and police worldwide, it is considered one of the most effective means of identification. It is obvious that she is grossly misinformed.

The facts are as follows:

Firstly, it was decided with the Philippine authorities leading the investigation that DNA identification was the only method which could guarantee accurate victim identification. Fingerprints and dental records would not be widely available for the victims. With a search certainty of at least 99.9 percent, the type of DNA testing performed on the victims has been recognized by experts as the most objective and certain means of identification worldwide. The chance of an incorrect match is one in a billion. The DNA testing was conducted at the ICMP's laboratory in Sarajevo, one of the world's most advanced.

Second, as to why some relatives remain unaccounted for, sadly the main reason is that they are still missing, with some still trapped inside the wreckage of the ferry.

Third, if some recovered bodies remain unidentified, it is primarily because their relatives have not provided required reference DNA samples. In this respect, however, comparisons would have been impossible if whole bodies provided in the tragedy.

Lastly, we are surprised by some media reports stating that the return of the victims led to clouding the cost of DNA tests. The costs were borne entirely by Interpol.

Both Interpol and the ICMP have proceeded as far as was possible with the identification of the recovered victims. Nearly 2,300 reference blood samples collected from relatives led to the DNA assisted identification of 147 victims, allowing the return of their remains to their families.

We hope that journalists reporting on the identification process of the victims of this tragedy will use every available opportunity to consult Interpol and ICMP to ensure accuracy in their reports.

—RONALD K. NOBLE, secretary general, Interpol; ANTHONY BORRELLI, director general, International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)

British outraged over 'morally wrong' expense claims

IN AN EDITORIAL OF THE SUNDAY 21 edition of the Sunday Times on parliamentary spokesperson Gary Hitler's Dublin defense of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's huge travel expenses. The editorial stated, "It's just as well most Filipinos remain profoundly ignorant of the political crisis going on in the United Kingdom."

I translate for the best part of the statement, so I will bring my views to you. The editorial stated the "same sex, ethnic tie" moment of the British people over the excessive and scandalous fraudulent expense claims of their members of Parliament (MPs)—the contempt part of our congressmen's pork barrel scandal. Similar to the motives under the extravagant spate of meeting expenses maintaining a home (in their own constituency) and a second home in London while serving on their parliamentary duties. Some MPs claimed for everything from cleaning bills and horse feed to a chest freezer and a pair of curtains.

Under the heat of the scandal, Gordon Brown's administration promised a crackdown. He then established the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) to oversee MPs' claims and ensure that they were paying public money for things they claimed on their expenses but the police declined that they may be "within rules but morally wrong."

A sampling of these expenses were: renovating first class with chevy wines and staying in five-star hotels; home and garden maintenances; and hiring spouses and offspring as assistants. As it was latched on as questionably (unscientific) was the porn movie records of the husband of an MP who was also a Cabinet minister.

Until the start of the "saving" of the expense claims in early May, it took just seven weeks to

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The economic crisis has made the conduct of business unusual today. More than ever, CSR should be prioritized to help the less privileged in weathering financial crises and become more productive members of society.

The League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) will conduct its CSR Expo 2009, which will focus on how the corporate sector can partner with micro and small entrepreneurs and provide access to skills, market, and opportunities.

The two-day expo and conference will feature speakers from LCF member corporations as they present case studies on how their business has contributed to the development of less privileged communities. Moreover, the expo will highlight exhibits of company products and services as well as a series of lectures on entrepreneurial skills development.

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The Global Challenge Network founder
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Jollibee Foods Philippines
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Across the NATION

Peasant leader tortured, says rights group

BAHAUS DOUNTY
A boy walks past the burned-out bodies of some of the Bangsamoro men he says were killed in Datu Piang town in Maguindanao province. AFP PHOTO / MARK NAVALES

By Nikko Dizon

MISSING FOR THE LAST 10 DAYS, A PEASANT LEADER WAS found by the human rights group Karapatan detained at the camp-dad center in Camp Crame late last week, tortured and curiously placed under the government's witness protection program.

Orin Marquez, 31, had broken to his body and complained that his hands were hurting so much, Glen Malabanan, deputy secretary general of Karapatan Southern Tagalog, told the Inquirer by phone yesterday.

Malabanan said that on last Thursday, his group was advised by colleagues to check if Marquez was at the Crame Custodial Center.

"We went there and asked. True enough, we were told that he was there," Malabanan said.

He added: "But we wondered why he was placed under the witness protection program."

Marquez was a leader of the Mindoro-based Kampanya ng Kamalayang Magsasaka or Timog Katagalugan.

He was among the 72 activists, which included labor lawyer Remigio Saladores, who were charged with the bombing of cell sites and multiple murder and multiple frustrated murder for allegedly participating in an New People's Army (NPA) ambush in Mindoro last 2006.

Senior Supt. Sonny Hechanova, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) chief of intelligence unit, said in an earlier phone interview that Marquez is a top official of the communist New People's Army.

However, he denied reports of Marquez in the region and said the operation was made by the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Rizal) regional intelligence unit instead.

This was, however, denied by Supt. Primitivo Tabajunda, Calabarzon intelligence chief, saying it was not them who made the arrest.

According to Marquez, they were forcibly taken last June 23 by armed men in front of his house in Barangay Motong Bloc in Taguig City, along with an unidentified man and woman.

The same was witnessed by several neighbors watching a basketball tournament nearby.

Ramadan Marquez told the Inquirer in an earlier interview that fearing for his son's safety, he urged Orin to relocate to Mindoro sometime.

Since then, the younger Marquez had been working as a tailor.

Dionito said his wife Imelda traveled to Manila to look for Orin on calls they were told that he had been abducted and was missing.

They scoured various police camps in the metropolis accompanied by Karapatan. It's only on Saturday, the Marquez couple was finally able to hold and talk to their son amid grave circumstances.

Marquez cried most of the time, Malabanan said.

Marquez spoke of being tortured and blindfolded for four days and four nights.

"He said his hands were cuffed behind him. Men beat him up and clanked his head in the toilet bowl," Malabanan said in Filipino.

While blindfolded, Marquez was also forced to put his thumbprint on a document, Malabanan added.

By Marquez' account, he was tortured in another place and not inside the custodial center, Malabanan said.

Karapatan will file charges against those who tortured Marquez, Malabanan said.

With a report from Marlene Grace Inquirer Southern Luzon

29 militants face charges anew

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—TWENTY-NINE alleged activists in Southern Tagalog, were implicated in another attempted murder charge in Rizal province, an official of a militant group said Saturday.

"We were in the Board's office (in Antipolo, Rizal) yesterday for an ongoing preliminary investigation on a different murder case, and we accidentally saw from our lawyer's desk at court that there was another case filed," said Dinah Bautista, regional coordinator of Defend ST (Southern Tagalog), in a phone interview Saturday.

Defend ST is a task force formed to defend victims of political persecution, after scenarios of charges were filed to different provinces against known political activists.

Charges

The charges of attempted murder stemmed from a shooting incident on Nov. 14, 2008 at Sitio Ilat, Barangay Pantay, Bolo, Angono, Rizal.

Members of the New People's Army (NPA) allegedly shot 2Lt. Herbie Lopez of the Army's 16th Infantry Battalion and Cpl. Ricky Magnayo and Cpl. Bernard Covey of the 59th Infantry Battalion.

Bautista, quoting the case filed, said a certain Herbie Lopez, who claimed to be a Scout's 59th rebel, pinoy5rebleon.

Charged with attempted murder were Nicanor Aguelo, Rafael Aguelo, Anne Cruz, Loreto Salles, Aileen Monsuelo, Renee Ayuka, Dio Navarro, Jacqueline Rivera, Benjamin Dimalaio, Kate Lorenzo, Melchor Abesamis, Leng Ramon, Edmar Fernandez, Bernie Cruz, Francis Tolentino, Ray Rivera, Edwin Egot, Antonio Gala, Emmanuel Dimalaio, Arman Almadin, Mario Cuesta, Yolanda Tria, Ann Bernardino, Ronnie Legaspi, Lee Bautista, Emmanuel Amoreto, Renato Alvarez, Rhoriza Bell and Agnes Bautista.

"The case already had a resolution. The implication of this is that they could release warrants of arrest any time, starting a crackdown," Malabanan said.

Lt. Cesar Yparraguirre, spokesperson of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, has confirmed the existence of the case filed.

A source from the military's public affairs office, who requested not to be named as he was not authorized to speak for the military, said "some" of the 29 charged were members of the New People's Army, while others were members of the National Democratic Front or legal left-leaning organizations, although he failed to give particulars.

"It's an old strategy to deny membership in the communist party," the source said.

He added that all 29 had participation in the shooting incident as they were implicated in the case by the witness.

Repeat

The "newly discovered" Rizal case was the sixth filed that involved almost similar personalities tagged as members of the communist army.

"Whenever a man in blue runs down a case to dismissal, they immediately come up with another one," Bautista said.

In August 2008, nine activists were arrested in Silang, Cavite over alleged possession of illegal firearms and explosives, but the prosecutor found no basis for the charges.

Most were the murder and frustrated murder charges filed against 72 individuals in connection with the 2006-2008 ambush in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro and seven cases against 27 activists in Lemery, Batangas.

Both (cases) were already dismissed," Mendoza-Gonzales said.

Two other ongoing cases are the murder charges against 10 activists in Bodegayan, Rizal filed in July 2008 and rebellion charges against 23 militants in Lucena, Quezon in 2002.

Among the 29 respondents, Renato Aquino, chair of the Kalipunan ng mga Magsasaka sa Kabikolan (Peasant Confederation in Bicol), was involved in all six.

Prohibited party Edwin Egot and labor leaders Emmanuel Dimalaio and Ray Rivera, involved also in the alleged Mindoro ambush, were earlier arrested to separate incidents and released after some months.

Agnes Bautista, previously considered one of Arroyo's Forty-Six, was among the 27 charged with arson in Batangas. *Marlene Grace, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Barangay execs to sue solon over census

LUMBANGO CITY—VILLAGE OFFICIALS here said they were suing Maguindanao 1st district Rep. Didagen Dilangalen before the court in connection with the result of the 2007 census in the city.

Nolasco Sosa, president of the Association of Barangay Councils (ABC) here, said Dilangalen has consistently insisted the result of the census, which showed that the city was already qualified to have a separate congressional district from Maguindanao.

Based on the 2007 census the city's population increased by around 22,000 from the 2000 figure of 205,000.

"The latest population census confirmed that the city is now entitled to a separate congressional district under the 1987 Constitution," councilor Perdito Hernandez said.

Mayor Mushtak Sosa said the result of the 2007 census had already been approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo but Dilangalen would still not recognize it.

He said however, if the Dilagan district was aimed at compelling Dilangalen, who represents the city in Congress, to recognize the presidential promulgation of the latest national census.

Sosa said village officials have been holding meetings with lawyers to firm up the case against the legislator, who continues to be at odds with some city officials.

The decision to sue Dilangalen came after Maguindanao 2nd district Rep. Simeon Datumanong said he would not sponsor a bill for the creation of a separate district for the city because it is Dilangalen's turf.

"That is an honorary courtesy. No member of Congress would want to sponsor any bill for another lawmaker's district," Datumanong said.

But Dilangalen explained that he would not sponsor a bill that would create a congressional district for the city on the ground that the result of census was rigged.

He said some politicians asked village officials to "manufacture" figures in the 2007 census report.

But Sosa, the ABC president, said Dilangalen's claim that the 2007 census was manipulated be officials was "too much, speculative and baseless." *Acmad S. Mandawa, Inquirer Mindanao*

Drivers plan strike against oil price hikes

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
Chief correspondent
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—TRANSPORT GROUPS in Panay and Guimaras will go on a two-day strike next week to protest continued increases of oil prices and a controversial government order that significantly raised fines for traffic violations.

The Hugpong Transport Alliance-Panay and Guimaras on Saturday has finalized plans for a strike on July 13-14, said Julius Jolliseb, one of the conveners of the alliance and chair of the Panay chapter of the Pinoy-tatong transportong mga Tsuper at Operator Nationalist (Piston).

Some 25 transport organizations from Iloilo, Aklan, Capiz and Guimaras have so far agreed to join the protest, Jolliseb said in a phone interview on Sunday. These include groups of drivers and operators of jeepneys and tricycles.

They are calling for the scrapping of Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Order 2008-39-which, Jolliseb said, imposed fines "way beyond the earnings of drivers and operators."

The order, implemented in the last quarter of last year, raised fines for traffic violations from 100 percent to 5,500 percent.

Jolliseb said the fine for drivers operating tricycles while driving was increased from P163 to P1,070, while that for driving with an expired license was raised from P300 to P400.

The unreasonable use of fuel, now at stratosphere levels is unbearable by a fare of P15,000 up from P150.

While operations could be adjusted to their need other providers, these should be within reasonable limits in consideration of the earnings and situation of the drivers and operators, Jolliseb said.

"Most jeepney drivers earn P350-P200 per day paying the rentals for at least 14 hours. Major times, we go home empty-handed and we could not even travel the boundary (rental of jeepney unit)," he said.

Revenue-generating scheme

He deplored the DOTC order as "more of a revenue-generating scheme than a measure to discourage violations."

The order is being investigated by the House of Representatives based on a resolution filed by Bayan Muna Representative Satur Ocampo and Teodoro Casiño. It was being implemented without any consultations with the transport groups, they said.

Piston has also asked a Baguio City Regional Trial Court to issue an injunction against the DOTC order, Jolliseb said.

The transport groups are also protesting the continued increase in oil prices which they blame on the Oil Deregulation Law.

Jolliseb said drivers' incomes had significantly dropped as commuters have been lessened their fares from 06 to P6.50. From March 9, when the latest fare rollback was implemented, the price of diesel fuel has increased by P7.55 per liter, or from P26.10 to P33.65.

"The oil price increases and the concomitant fares have further eroded our meager income-leaving them very hand-to-mouth," Jolliseb said.

Registration of Hanjin union stalled anew

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—EFFORTS TO register a union for over 15,000 Filipino workers at the shipyard of the Korean-owned Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Philippines Inc. (HHICIP) at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales have been delayed.

Ezekiel Hector Lester Nicart by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Central Luzon, the application of the HHICIP Workers Union was referred to the DOLE's legal services unit in late June to settle the confusion on the autonomy of HHICIP and its subcontractors, said Nathaniel Lontoc, DOLE regional director, on Sunday.

"We are not the issue now is, 'Who really is their employer?'" Lontoc said.

HHICIP, SC Tech (SCTECH) or Korean Engineering Consulting Corp.) and the Seoul-based Power Tech Corp. are "one and the same is at least HHICIP-listed Yoldi the majority of the shares of stock of SC Tech or KECC," said union president Ibrahim Nasser, who is on appeal to the DOLE on June 25.

The union cited a news item on the HHIC website saying SC Tech or KECC is a HHIC subsidiary. The union also presented documents from SEC showing that SC Tech, also registered as KECC, has changed its name to Greenbench Power Tech Corp.

Josh Kwan Seo, HHICIP general manager, said the company and Greenbench are "180 percent different and independent companies registered [with the Securities and Exchange Commission] and DOLE under Philippine laws."

"The allegation has no legal basis," Seo told the Inquirer on Sunday.

Remedios said workers were issued identification cards with their date of hiring after, HHICIP, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Development Training Center and SC Tech.

"They were transferred from one subcontractor to another with the same jobs, same work place and same superiors; some of them even have a time card under HHICIP and a different pay slip, causing other confusing information and documents they have at hand," Remedios said.

He said union members have two things to commend: They were issued Greenbench IDs and signed employment contracts with the same firm.

The union was organized in July last year. Greenbench is appealing the 13 March resolution to cross that segment and with DOLE as of March, a report obtained from the labor agency showed. Benette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

CLASSES SUSPENDED

168 students show flu-like symptoms

By Carla P Gomez and Alex Pal
Inquirer Visayas

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL—THE UNIVERsity of Negros Occidental-Recoletos (UNO-R) suspended classes at all levels Friday afternoon after 168 students showed flu-like symptoms.

Carlito Legaspi, UNO-R director of student affairs, said seven of the number of the Dalhe cases were in high school.

The alarming number of Influenza cases and the rapid increase prompted school authorities to send students home Friday afternoon until July 9 in a precautionary measure, he said.

The school premises will be disinfected while the students are away, he said.

But he stressed there were no confirmed influenza A(H1N1) cases, as UNO-R, schools has 6,000 students from preschool to college.

Last Monday, 133 students of St. John's Institute in Bacolod City also developed flu symptoms, school authorities to suspend all classes on Tuesday.

Health authorities said seven of the affected 133 students have recovered.

The 1,400 SB students are expected to return to school Monday.

Grasser of the Science Elementary School in Bais City in Negros Oriental have also been suspended since Tuesday after several of its students reportedly exhibited symptoms of the A(H1N1) virus.

This is the first school schools suspended for classes in Negros Oriental because of possible A(H1N1) infection.

Bais City Mayor Hector Villanueva ordered the suspension of classes and directed a cleanup of the entire building.

Dr. Rosanna Villanueva head of the DOH (Department of Health) on Negros Oriental, said the DOH was able to gather five random swab samples from the children and sent them to the government-run Victorio Soto Memorial Medical Center in Dumaguete City for testing.

If the symptoms are present, the swab samples would be sent to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, the only institution that can confirm if the virus is indeed the A(H1N1) virus.

"This will take a long time because until now, we are still awaiting the results of the samples we had sent thirty two weeks ago," Villanueva said. The RITM is swamped with requests for testing from all over the country.

Villanueva, meanwhile, said he has ordered an investigation to determine if school officials were negligent in handling the viral spread.

"I have been informed that some of the children had been exposing for a school even though they had been sick for several days," Villanueva said.

Villanueva said he would file administrative cases against those responsible in case it was proven that they were negligent.

Villanueva said that only the Grade 6 pupils of the Bais City Science Elementary School were spared from exhibiting flu-like symptoms. The other grade levels had one or two cases each.

Dumaguete City had one confirmed case of A(H1N1) but the patient already recovered two weeks ago, Villanueva said.

RELIEF
The World Food Program distributes rice to evacuees in Talipao town in Maguindanao after weeks of being stalled by the Army due to operations skirmishes in the province.

Police seize 15 turtles from 2 Chinese traders

By Dollie T. Hallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA, CITY—TWO LOCAL CHINESE businessmen about to transport 15 freshwater turtles to Manila were arrested by the police on Friday afternoon and released three hours later pending further investigation.

Police chief Supt. Reynaldo Vlagtas identified the suspects as Hok Liu and Willie Tan, both residents of this city.

At around 3:30 p.m., the two men, carrying two boxes, were about to board a Manila-bound passenger bus at the Lucena Grand Central Terminal, police said.

THESE turtles were seized from two Chinese businessmen in Lucena City on Friday. PHOTO BY DOLLIE T. HALLARI JR.

When the bus dispatcher inspected the boxes, he discovered the pursuits live green turtles and immediately notified the police.

'Wedding gift'

A police team arrived and arrested the Chinese businessmen at the police station for questioning.

"According to the two, they bought the turtles from an unknown vendor. They are going to Manila to give the turtles as wedding gift to a friend who is fond of collecting rare creatures," Vlagtas said.

The police were forced to release the two men later in the evening pending the official recommendation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which was expected to be submitted on Monday.

"The local DENR people were not able to confirm the species of the seized turtles. If they are included in the endangered species, we may need to file charges against them," Vlagtas said.

However, lawyer Sheila de Leon, Tanggol Kalikasan foundation legal director, explained that even if the seized turtles were not included in the list of endangered species, the two may need to still be criminally liable for violation of Republic Act No. 9147 (Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act).

She explained that the transport of any kind of wildlife should be accompanied with an official permit from the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau.

PDEA: Benguet no longer marijuana country

NEWSBRIEFS

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

Tag NPA rebel nabbed

A HIGH-RANKING leader of the New People's Army (NPA) in northern Mindanao was captured during a combat operation in Tangub City in Misamis Occidental, the military said on Wednesday.

Benito Perabers, also known as "Bondoc" and "Dencio," yielded explosives, shotgun components, five mobile phones and a CPU phone when captured in Barangay Villaba by members of the 10th Police Regional Mobile Group and the 53rd Infantry Battalion, according to 1Lt. Ariel Bacti Castro, spokesperson of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

Castro said Perabers was identified by a witness as the one who executed a militiaman, Ernesto Gonzalez, in Gusto Baruso in Misamis Occidental on June 15.

Illegal possession of explosives have been filed against him, the official said.

John Unson, Inquirer Mindanao

■ COTABATO CITY

Barredaled cop killed

BARRICADED suspects and killed a lawmaker's police escort while he was walking near his home in Sultan Kudarat town in Maguindanao on Thursday night, police said.

Insp. Datu Abdul Turki Talusan, who was also acting municipal police chief, had multiple bullet wounds in the body and died on the way to the Datu Odin Emergency Hospital, according to Supt. Bonifacio Dela Cruz, police spokesperson in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Citing witnesses' accounts, Talusan said Salman's two bodyguards, but the attackers overpowered him.

Edith Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ DAVAO CITY

Bridge project rushed

THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is rushing construction of the new Quirino Bridge in Baguio, Davao del Sur, in response to Sen. Benigno Aquino's request for its immediate completion.

The bridge links the province to General Santos City, and the requesting has been delayed twice.

Since construction of the bridge began three years ago, travelers going to and from General Santos have been forced to use the longer and rough Kapatagan diversion road.

Richmill B. Pinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

■ BAGUIO CITY

Nurse-instructor killed

A NURSE was shot dead while walking to her house from a hospital duty early Thursday in Barangay Tantoc, police said.

Zhaimee Peñez, 24, a daughter of a radio announcer and commercial model Pedrito Jose Jr., was hit in the head and later shot by two more suspects in a motorcycle at about 5 a.m.

The victim was also an instructor at Cosigon Cooperative.

Supt. Marlon Victoria, city police chief, said robbery and other possible motives were being looked into. Her relatives said Peñez had received threatening text messages before she was killed.

Richard Sotelo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

■ LUCENA CITY

Teacher shot dead

A PUBLIC school teacher was shot dead inside his house by still unidentified men in Buenavista town in Quezon on Thursday afternoon, police said.

Salvador Alfanta, 50, teacher in charge of the Buenavista Elementary School, was shot in the left chest by the assailant, while an accomplice acted as lookout, said Insp. Arvin Asis, Buenavista police chief.

He died on the spot, police said. The killers fled to a forest area at the back of the nearby Buenavista Central Elementary School.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Pili mayor dies

MAYOR Alexis San Luis of Pili, Camarines Sur, died while undergoing treatment for serious injuries in the hospital in Legazpi City on Thursday after a road accident in Buenavista town in Quezon the day before, police said.

San Luis, his wife and five other companions were traveling along the Maharlika Highway on their way home about a 5-ton dump truck when their vehicle collided with a Manila-bound bus in Barangay Pinaric, said Insp. Giovanni Dalisay, Quezon police chief.

"The bus crashed into other vehicles and it was too late for the driver to stop his vehicle. The two incidents and hit the driver side of the mayor's vehicle. The impact was strong," Dalisay said over the phone.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ MAJIKATE

Town councilor slain

PATO (BOHOL) (3rd Lead) A town council of Pilar town on Thursday night, police said.

Michael Distillano, 37, was shot in different parts of the body with .45 cal. pistols at around 8:30 p.m. at his backyard in Barangay Poblacion, said Senior Supt. Rodney "Boboy" Baroy, Majikate police director. Motive for the killing was still being determined.

Roy M. Rosal, Inquirer Southern Luzon

SPIDER BOYS Boys negotiate the iron girders of the Mabinay-Look Bridge in Samar. Carnation Sur to plunge into the nearby waters of Ilog at Nasi

PHOTO BY ALEJANDRO CALVARIO JR./CDN

Agriculturists' appeal to farmers: Stop using sunflowers for compost

By Desiree Cabus
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—AGRICULturists have asked farmers to stop using sunflowers as compost after they observed that honey production started to drop in areas where the plants used to thrive.

Michael Bangawayan, director of Hine Tent, a nongovernment organization advocating alternative farming practices, said beekeepers surveyed the dwindling honey harvest in 2007 due to the cutting of sunflower stands, locally known as marapuak, for use as compost substitute.

Most beekeepers rely on sunflowers growing on hillsides as a source of nectar. The flower, which usually grows during the cold season, usually from late November to February in the Cordillera, is the top producer of nectar for honey bees.

Honey bees also get their nectar from apricot and strawberry plants that are abundant here, Bangawayan said.

"The demand for [local] honey is still high, but we cannot meet it," he said.

Due to poor production, many owners of apiaries and their workers in the region have left to work in honey-producing countries, such as New Zealand and Canada, he said.

Patricio Asumayo, chief of the agribusiness and marketing assistance division of the Department of Agriculture in the Cordillera, also blamed changing weather for the decrease in honey production.

Some beekeepers bring their beehives to the lowland provinces of Tarlac and La Union so the insects could gather nectar from sweet flowers, he said.

"I hope the [suggested] of Fangalbenga (Baguio Flower Festival) will help in the conservation of the sunflower because they use it as a symbol to promote the festival," Bangawayan said.

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—MARIJUANA fields may still be found in Benguet's most remote villages, but the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) said the province was no longer the country's marijuana capital.

PDEA officials told the provincial peace and order council on Friday that Kapangan town had been declared "marijuana free," while only four villages in Kibungan and Bakun towns had remained free of the illegal weed.

The three towns were known in the 1970s as the country's "Golden Triangle," a major source of marijuana.

Public Lorraine Wegay-Licdan, chief of the PDEA's legal and prosecution division in the Cordillera, said efforts to rid the province of marijuana cultivation had been successful because of the cooperation of local officials.

"Their programs that provided farmers with alternative sources of income have helped the PDEA [efforts] to eradicate all marijuana plantations [in the province]," she said.

From January to June, investors had not robbed any marijuana plantations in Kapangan, PDEA reports said the villages of Balakbak and Tabaoknag in Kibungan, and Kayapa and Buculliat in Bakun were still far cleared of marijuana fields.

The PDEA said its counterdrug operations had pushed growers to the remote areas where Benguet, Ifugao Sur and La Union share boundaries. The areas include 12,467 hectares of land where 24 marijuana sites have been identified, it said.

Kapangan Mayor Robert Gawisan said his town had freed itself from marijuana when farmers found livelihood in raising bees and silkworms, and in planting orchardists and the cool crop pears.

Kibungan Mayor Benito Shalito said local officials were exploring farmers to try their luck in planting Arabica coffee and delicate mushrooms, aside from raising silkworms.

He said the villages of Balakbak and Tabaoknag had remained vulnerable to marijuana growing since these were the town's poorest.

Bakun Mayor Elizardo Gonzalo said farmers in Kayapa and Buculliat still plant marijuana because of the absence of farm-to-market roads. "These villages could be reached after a day's hike. This explains why marijuana, which is easy to raise and transport, becomes attractive to farmers," he said.

Gonzalo said the town would use a P1.5-million grant from the Department of Energy Board to start a silkworm industry for the farmers.

Gov. Marcos Pongayan said the days of the province's remaining marijuana plantations were numbered after the Ilocos Industry Development Authority and the Philippine Textile Research Institute promised to start a sericulture industry. *Reliever Garcia, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Funds sought for study to settle fate of mining town

BAGUIO CITY—GOVERNMENT AGENCIES are scrambling for funds to finance a geological study that would explain once and for all why residents of a mining town in Benguet have been sinking since the 1970s.

Some buildings at the Mankayan High School grounds caved in on June 5 due to slide that some geologists have anticipated after a similar slide hit Barangay Colalo on July 28, 1999.

But to enforce relocation, officials must first declare the area an inhabitable danger zone, said Ifugao Gov. Teodoro Baguilat in a news conference on Wednesday.

Baguilat said he was set to declare the town uninhabitable but could not do so without detailed geological information because it is unlikely.

Samuel Pangan, Cordillera director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), said the area ready to issue a certification to expand up the relocation, but he said MGB also required data to provide the design zone policy enough legal support.

Pangan said the study must be extensive because relocation may also affect the Mankayan town hall since a wide area of the town sits atop the Lepanto fault line.

The last comprehensive study was conducted by researchers of the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences in 2000, but it was requested for cutting to determine if the sinking was caused by the fault or by underground mining operations of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. (LCMC).

Pangan said the LCMC has denied that the sinking area has stop its major operations, but it could not supply MGB with maps.

"They reported to us that all those old records were wiped out by a flood," he said.

Pangan said the full study cost has been placed at over P1 million, which the provinces could not spend.

Pangan said the government has appointed the National Disaster Coordinating Council to help secure funds.

"Each science serving would cost P150,000," he said.

Oliver Lates, Cordillera director of the Office of Civil Defense, said the agency has urged residents to relocate since because of the potential magnitude of future slides. Vincent Cabreza, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

PhilHealth Advisory

No. 07-01-2009

PIN needed before filing benefit claims with PhilHealth

In order to continuously update its membership and contributions database and help ensure the delivery of quality health care services to all its members, PhilHealth shall be implementing the **NO PHILHEALTH IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN) – NO CLAIM** policy starting next year.

This policy will enable the still sizeable number of unregistered employed members in the government and private sectors to have their own PIN which will be required of them prior to availment of PhilHealth benefits.

As such, all employers are enjoined to update their employees' member records from July 15 to December 30, 2009 pursuant to Rule III Section 18 of the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 7875 as amended which states that:

> *'All government and private employers are required to register their employees with the Corporation and shall be issued a permanent and unique PhilHealth Identification Number (PIN). It is likewise the obligation of the employer to report to the Corporation its newly-hired employees within thirty (30) calendar days from assumption to office'*
>
> *'Further, the employer has the obligation to give notice to the Corporation of an employee's separation within thirty (30) calendar days from separation. xxx'*

Employed members are also encouraged to coordinate with their respective employers for the updating of their membership records with PhilHealth.

Only properly accomplished Employer's Remittance Reports (RF1) shall be accepted for posting of premium contributions to avoid inconsistency of information against the PhilHealth membership database. All RF1s submitted in hard or soft copy format with incomplete or incorrect entries shall be rejected and returned to the concerned employer for compliance.

For inquiries, visit or call any PhilHealth office nearest you.

PhilHealth

Stop fielding priests in politics, bishop tells Pampanga laity

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

ANGELES CITY—A CATHOLIC BISHOP has asked lay leaders in Pampanga to stop fielding priests as candidates in the elections, shelling out the names for Gov. Eddie Panlilio, a priest, to run for reelection or reinstatement position.

The appeal of Auxiliary Bishop Pedro Arigo David came toward the end of the forum of the Council of Laity of the Archdiocese of San Fernando at the Holy Angel University here on Saturday.

"Don't push a member of the clergy to run in the elections," David said.

It was the first time that the bishop made such a public appeal. San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, who left before the forum started, said in April that the Church and Auxiliary Bishop Pedro is Mallari had talked with Panlilio to urge him to leave politics and resume his priestly duties.

Not necessary

David said the involvement of Catholics in politics or candidacy is a necessity if clean and honest elections made it "not necessary for clerics to enter politics."

The 2007 elections, he said, presented different circumstances, referring to the time when concerned people in Pampanga packed Panlilio, already serving 20 years as priest, to file his candidacy for governor against then-Speaker Manuagpak Arroyo.

Panlilio, who attended the forum, said he welcomed David's remarks.

"I did not present myself as a candidate. I was part of the search process [for a suitable bet] but when that failed, they fielded me. You told reporters.

He said he professed to enjoin the clergy other his work study in 2010.

Monkayo townsfolk flee from clashes

LIFE IN THE EVACUATION CENTER
A 79-year-old woman cooks her own food inside a congested evacuation center in Dan Ping town, Maguindanao province. RAMIL CORE, INQUIRER PHOTO

By Vincent L. Go
Inquirer Mindanao

TAGUM CITY—SHELLING CLASHES between government forces and communist rebels have forced hundreds of people to leave their homes and livelihood in Barangay Anos in Monkayo town, which borders Compostela Valley and Agusan del Sur.

"Yes, there are fifth (internally-displaced persons) now situated in Sitio Lemang and Binalbon in San Jose. (But) we have no report yet as to their exact number," Josephine Pesayo, Compostela Valley municipal welfare officer, told the Inquirer.

She said the families had already received initial assistance, such as food packs, from town officials.

As of Saturday, the military said it still had no report of rebel casualties and that the government had so far not suffered any injury.

Air support

"Helicopter gunships were called in to provide air support to the troops on the ground," Lt. Col. Rodolfo C. Cabangbang, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City, said.

Cabangbang said the helicopter gunships helped prevent any personnel casualty.

Soldiers from the Army's 3rd Special Forces Battalion were conducting an operation when they clashed with the New People's Army rebels, said Senior Supt. Ronald Orth Rosa, Compostela Valley police director.

The rebels had stolen rattled the police office of Sto. Jesús in Agusan del Sur, taking several high-powered firearms. The town is only a few kilometers away from Monkayo.

4 nabbed for illegal drugs in Davao Norte

TAGUM CITY—THE INTENSIFIED police operation against drug syndicate in Davao del Norte has yielded four armed suspects in Panabo City on Friday, report reaching the provincial police office here said on Saturday.

The report identified three arrested as Marvin, 29, and Jayson, 20, all surnamed Mag-; Gary Godinez, 33, and Israel Cabolloy, 44.

The report said members of the 1010th provincial mobile group raided the lair of the suspects, who allegedly belong to a Panabo-based drug syndicate, in Barangay Cagangohan Sur based on a warrant issued by Regional Trial Court Judge Danilo Bibit.

The suspects had been under surveillance for days, the report said.

The reports yielded various types of firearms, including handguns, marijuana and other types of drugs and drug paraphernalia.

The suspects did not resist arrest and surrendered after police ranged their recovered holdout, the report said. —Vincent L. Go, Inquirer Mindanao

THE RESTORATION of the Republic of the Philippines
Independence Day Celebration - July 4, 2009

Know the Truth and the Truth shall set you FREE

63rd PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE
July 4, 2009 Let the Truth Prevail

BALICBALICAN, Nr. July 4, 1946, the United States recognized the Philippine Independence in the Treaty of Manila, since then, and it was observed in the Philippines as Independence Day, until August 4, 1964 when, upon the advice of historians and the urging of nationalists, President Diosdado Macapagal signed into law Republic Act No. 4166 designating June 12 as the country's Independence Day. June 12 had previously been observed as Flag Day. June 12, 1898 - Declaration of Philippine Independence as Kawit Shrine. Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo had his Casa Hacienda in Bacoor as his headquarters. Gen. Aguinaldo and his Military Officials agreed with Spanish Authorities to be exiled in Hong Kong for 1 Million pesos after they surrendered their arms. December 10, 1898 - The Phil. Archipelago was ceded by Spain to the United States of America. this, as the U.S. paid Spain $20,000,000 after 3 months. [illegible] To restore our nation keeps lead to our true and history foundations. Willing to be removed as we live, stand for the truth and walk on in the standard of our Yahweh-God Almighty. True Foundation is the key of light and Strong victorious restoration, for our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the spirit of darkness that is in the heavenly realms.

WE ARE MISGUIDED. THERE IS DECEPTION. "We cannot live with a lie. It was only on July 4, 1946 that we achieved our full independence from the United States of America, our last ruler. That made the Philippines the first Asian nation to gain independence from any foreign rule and domination. Evidence of our real independence is clearly printed on our Php100.00 bill, our legal tender, recognized all over the world, like the illustration on the right side of the bill, showing the American Flag being brought down as the Philippine Flag was being raised again. Question? Can we change our birthday? In this case, our Independence Day? What is the point? Could it be Pride? Deception? Manipulation? Or Control? Let us declare that it is for the truth will set us free. Let the truth prevail. Let us expand and spread the Philippine Independence Day Celebration. Let us allow Yahweh-God's victory to Rule and Reign in the Philippines, not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of Yahweh-God of Israel".

WE STAND FOR THE TRUTH

Last Saturday, we declared Restoration of Republic of the Philippine Independence Day Celebration July 4, 2009 "DECLARATION SERVICE" 5:00 at the Grand Sabbath Day of Yahweh-God of Israel, Tort Bonifacio, Global City. We unbelted, restored and raised the largest Philippine flag nationwide.

I, GRACE GALINDEZ-GUPANA, *Filipina citizen, of legal age, resident of Quezon City, Philippines, Yahweh's (God's) Ambassador of Goodwill and Peace of Israel and Philippines to the world, reborns, declares the restoration of July 4 as the True Philippine Independence Day from all foreign rule and governance in all sectors of society, nationally, economically politically, physically, spiritually, territorially and socially.*

NOW, therefore, starting this year onwards, I, together with our Mabuhay!AH Kingdom of Jerusalem, Global Foundation members, and believers of Yahshua (Jesus Christ) worldwide, will celebrate in spirit and in truth the 4th of July as the genuine Independence Day of the Republic of the Philippines under the aid of Almighty Yahweh-God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel."

Today, we declare our Independence Day, we shout to the world, Philippines your salvation comes. "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of YAHWEH-God of Israel has risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but YAHWEH will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. "Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Hallelu!AH!

ADVOCATOR: GRACE GALINDEZ-GUPANA

[illegible] Ambassador of Goodwill and Peace of Israel and Philippines to the World, President/Founder, Mabuhay!AH Kingdom of Jerusalem, Global Foundation, The President's 10-AIR Line Books International Corp., Holder of 3 Guinness World Records: Holder of the Largest Flag of Philippines, Israel and Jerusalem, 777 Tahl-Ah's Business and The Communication Center.

7 VICTORY DECLARATIONS for PHILIPPINES RESTORATION

1 We rededicate our nation and all nations and tribes all over the world to Yahweh-God of Israel the one true and living God, on earth as it is in heaven. We declare that Philippines and Filipinos all over the world will fully submit to His rule and reign through His Son, Yahshua HaMashiach-Hebrew name of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

As we obey the Bible and follow His Ten Commandments as the Moral Code for our conduct, laws and governance, we will have righteousness, prosperity, peace, justice we all aspire for. The 10 Commandments of Yahweh-God. 1. Thou shall have no other God before ME. 2. Thou shall not make unto thee any graven images and bow to them. 3. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord, Yahweh Elohim (Hebrew name of God of Israel) in vain. 4. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy - Saturday is the 7th day. 5. Honor thy father and thy mother; 6. Thou shalt not murder. 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 8. Thou shalt not steal. 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor; 10. Thou shalt not covet. AMEN.

2 We declare that the Philippines and Filipinos will always love, stand, support and pray for Israel, the Jews and Jerusalem as Yahweh's lord and command: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; may they prosper; those who love you" (Ps 122:6). AMEN.

3 We declare the Filipinos' culture, beliefs and traditions will come under the authority of the Word of Yahweh, the Bible (Old and New Testaments) and that all things in our cultures not aligned with the Word must be removed that we may please our Yahweh-God. AMEN.

That we will always stand for social justice, freedom from military rule in whatever form, freedom and rights of women and children in the grace and liberty provided for by Yahweh-God. (Amos 5:24) Following the examples of Yeshua-Jesus Christ in the Spirit of love and humility. AMEN.

4 We declare that the full and lasting independence of the Republic of the Philippines from the domination of the power of United States, Japan and Spain (in July 4, 1946 as it was recognized by the US in the Treaty of Manila (Ref: History of the Filipino People by Teodoro A. Agoncillo), as citizens of the Philippines, we recognize with submission the original Date July 4 to June 12, 1898 as Independence Day which was done in 1964 by then President Diosdado Macapagal.

In pursuance of our conviction, from this year onwards, we of the Rebirth/AD Kingdom of Jerusalem, Global Foundation together with our members and believers of Yahshua (Jesus Christ) worldwide will celebrate July 4 as PHILIPPINES TRUE INDEPENDENCE DAY, beginning the 4th and perpetuate of Yahweh-God Almighty. AMEN.

5 We declare that the Philippines and Filipinos will be free and delivered from the bondage of sin in all its satanic forms: idolatry, immorality in every aspect, corruption, impurity, perversion, lust, witchcraft, sorcery, unbelief and faithlessness, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, lies, evil desires, greed, anger, malice, slander and deceit.

We declare that every Filipino will bear the character of the fruit of Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit: Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, meekness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23). AMEN.

6 We declare that the Philippines and Filipinos will be free from idolatrous and pagan way of worship and basis, false teachings and practices introduced by satan in our people, land, churches and government for centuries. From hereon, we will celebrate in spirit and truth, the Biblical feasts and Holy convocations ordained only by Yahweh-God of Israel. AMEN.

7 We declare that the Philippines and Filipinos all over the world will experience the victory and blessings of our Yahweh-God by the salvation in His Son Yahshua HaMashiach-Jesus Christ, and bearing the full Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18) will stand against all schemes and deception of satan and his forces. As we walk on the victory of our resurrected Savior and King Yahshua-Jesus Christ. HALLELUYAH! AMEN.

PHILIPPINES RESTORATION

REST (Shabbat)

TORAH (Word of Yahweh-God of Israel/ Laws/ Commands/ Bible)

TZION (In the presence of Yahweh-God)

- **PHILIPPINES** - The Pearl of the Orient, a nation whose land is divided into 7,100 islands, with its mountains and valleys.
- **PHILIPINO** - Filo (Hebrew); Upo (Root) Phos (Kalbo) "But you are a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a People for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)
- **PILIPINAS** - Chosen Race being called for the end time work of Yahweh-God of Israel to earthen it to heaven.
- **PILIPINAS - LUPANG HINIRANG** - Chosen Land - "Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh of Israel, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance." (Ps 33:12)
- **PERLAS NG SILANGAN** - Pearl of the Orient Seas (Matt. 13:45-46)
  - 800 years under Spaniards (Set Israel to Egypt (Gen. 15:13-14); Moses (Ha-Yasha) to return to Promised Land (Exo 15-13-14); Nehemiah (Ha-Yasha) to Jerusalem because of disobedience and idolatry (Set Israel Exile (Jer.24-44); Messianically, Yahshua-Jesus (Matt. 2:13-14)
- **PILIPINAS** - The only nation in Asia who voted for Israel to become a nation in 1948, Pres. Manuel Roxas.
  - country which allowed the entry and gave shelter to 10,000 Jews who fled from Nazi occupation during the holocaust in the 1930's Manuel L. Quezon, Pres. Pres. Manuel Quezon
  - called the Luminous Valley of Israel. Flag designed by Guinness World Record on its 60th year Anniversary as a nation in 1997 by Rev. Efren Valladolid-Angeles and CEO Yahweh's Business and Spreading Flag The Line of Judah on April 11, 2009, Feast of the First Fruits.
- **PILI-IS** - The Land of the Saints (people of Yahweh-God)
  - One of the 7 nuns chosen to serve the early Church because they were "full of faith and Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit).
- **PILIPINAS** - God save missionary nation, Philippines
  - believer of Yahshua Hamashiach (Jesus Christ), filled with Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) giving thanks to Yahweh-God of Israel. (Heavenly Father)

Lavish memorial for 'King of Pop'

Front page A1

FROM YAHOO!

Organizers of Sunday's memorial, which gets under way at 10 a.m. (1 a.m., Wednesday, in Manila) have appealed to ticketless fans to watch the event on television, leaving clues if fans outside of thousands take to the streets to mourn.

Some 11,000 free tickets were made available for fans hoping to attend the tribute at the Staples Center, while 8,500 were set aside for some of a neighboring venue where giant screens will show the memorial live.

Jackson's mysterious death from an apparent cardiac arrest at the age of 50 on June 25 sent shock waves rippling around the world, triggering an avalanche of tributes from thousands of fans.

Thousands of fans continue to flock to Jackson's star-studded hometown "Walk of Fame" in Los Angeles, while a makeshift memorial flowers, candle and note has steadily grown outside the gates of the singer's Neverland Ranch.

Jackson sold more than 750 million albums during a glittering four-decade career that was ultimately overshadowed by repeated allegations of child abuse, his startling physical transformation and recurrent financial woes.

A billion hits in 2 hours

A website set up to manage an online lottery of the event's 20,000 tickets received more than half a billion hits within two hours on Friday, reflecting the huge interest in the event.

A total of 1.6 million people applied for the tickets, according to the website.

"Personally, this would be enormous," said Robert Thompson, an expert in pop culture at Syracuse University in New York. "Everything that has to do with Michael Jackson has been done huge, super-sized."

Fifteen days after his death was ruled out on June 26 but the Los Angeles County Coroner's office has said it will not issue a final cause of death until the results of exhaustive toxicology tests are known in "several weeks."

Cause of death

Police investigators have zeroed in on the possible role of drugs in Jackson's death.

Chris Amitay, co-executive of the star have angrily alleged that Jackson was surrounded by a coterie of medical professionals willing to provide him with powerful prescription medications.

CBS media reports, citing unidentified law enforcement sources, say investigators found the powerful sedative Propofol, also known as Diprivan, among a variety of prescription medications in Jackson's home.

The investigators have seized the entire of the probe, which included last week at the Los Angeles Police Department as the request of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Propofol is commonly used in hospitals to induce anesthesia in patients before major surgery. Health care experts say it should never be used at home and should only be administered by trained anesthesiologists.

MJ legacy

Police have questioned Jackson's personal physicians, Conrad Murray but have stressed he is not suspected of criminal wrongdoing.

As the investigation into Jackson's death deepens, lawyers are preparing to head to court next week to settle soon his legacy.

Jackson's 79-year-old mother Katherine was placed in temporary control of her son's assets last week and appointed executors of the singer's three children, Prince Michael, 12, Paris, 11 and Prince Michael II, 7.

A 2002 will filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court last week named Katherine Jackson as guardian, but the singer's estate, Debbie Rowe forfeited she planned to seek custody of the children, a custody hearing scheduled for July 8 has now been reset for July 13.

On Monday, the two men named in elevation as Jackson's are scheduled to appear in court with lawyers for the star's family. In the first full hearing on the will, which is reportedly worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Attorneys for the Jackson family has not ruled whether the clan intends to contest the will. AFP

MJ memorial on live TV

BEST SEAT... THE KITCHEN. Many of the Michael Jackson may be a tough ticket live, but it shouldn't be hard to find it on television.

ABC, CBS, MSNBC and E! Entertainment are among the networks that have already announced plans to offer live coverage of the Tuesday memorial, set for 10 a.m. PDT (1 p.m. EDT, or 1 a.m. Wednesday, Manila time) in Los Angeles' Staples Center.

ABC is sending anchor Charles Gibson to Los Angeles for the show, setting aside its typical daytime programming.

CBS anchor Katie Couric will also be at the Staples Center, although the network has not yet said whether it may offering live coverage of the memorial.

NBC is not planning live coverage, but will wrap up highlights in a one-hour prime-time special on Tuesday night. AP

Recession dating: Hearts flutter as markets stutter

Front page A1

In economic times, it seems, animals resembling practically pet, and in many who find ourselves without a partner—have seized dates for companionship.

Some singles are now hunting for dates with the same buyer others are choosing hunting for jobs.

On the matchmaking website eHarmony.com, membership is up 125 percent, despite a monthly fee of up to $60, said society has soared 50 percent since September at OkCupid.com.

It's not just the frequency of dates that's changing—it's also the company that people are choosing to spend time with.

Instead of looking for something that's genuine in a world that isn't very secure," said Barbabette Siman, counselor of the Chicago dating center Single at Heart.

"After headlines full of why you can't land established bachelors, people are rearranging their own values," Bonaza added.

Misery loves company

Attendance at the monthly gatherings at the group's Chicago headquarters put $20 fee a dollar and a chance to spend the evening discussed second wives and board games—was more than double expectations in April and has stayed high since.

"When a lower company, especially if the perspective of losing it, said to set those large," said Craig Kinsley, a neurologist at University of Richmond.

Studs, dating, rather than being considered as expensive, can be a fruitful and surprising diversion. Like getting drunk without the realist list or hangover," Kinsley said.

According to Siman, romantic flattering for dates also release brain chemicals that can temporarily stave worries, even about retirement accounts and layoffs and falling portfolios and upside-down mortgages.

Still, Sam Yagan, the founder and CEO at OkCupid.com, says the changing dating climate is a matter of dollars and cents.

The very "digits figures it, a man can spend $1.50 buying drinks at a bar trying to pick up a stranger and have a better chance than a cold shoulder.

But, when he's in a relationship, a Saturday evening can be as simple as "Thai noodle takeout Netflix and wine but under the covers. All in all, that's "more bang for your buck," Yagan said.

Changes in behavior

It's more than just the economics. Reports say changes in behavior can relate to other world events—with upticks when users in bad.

Last fall, comparing periods when the stock market fell more than 100 points and when it rose by the same amount, eHarmony found more members searched for matches when the financial news was grim.

AOLIQ also gave in five days after a tragedy like the Virginia Tech shooting, while it spiked the same during "good" global events, like the Olympics.

Unlike those dashing or wedding events, the recession already has spanned more than 15 months.

The effects of the prolonged downturn are expected to last just as long—and those likely will mean more favorable changes in human behavior.

"It ends up being a reminder that you need to look for the important things in life," said Glen Geisinger, eHarmony's senior research scientist.

It isn't clear surprising when you get stuck spending to weed the most fundamental human relations," Geisinger added.

But the trend isn't uniform.

Subtle shifts

Recession cuts make some romances more challenging, experts say especially for those who've already said, "I do."

The stress that comes with lost, financial problems and economic uncertainty can shine a tough between partners.

And the more committed bachelor aren't developing a sudden hankering to buy princess-cut engagement rings.

Instead, the shifts are subtle. A devoted singleton going on more first dates; casual dates seeking long-term relationships; partners who might not have been attentive a while back—everyone younger or old-is, someone who lived in a "geographically undesirable" area—looking much better.

At the Chicago site for In Four Quites, the changing dating culture has led to a roughly 25 percent increase in the number of parties of two, according to Brandon Wise, the general manager.

"With such a tumultuous climate right now, I think people are looking for stability in their partner," Wise said. "I think it's a natural response of daring and more protected dating."

Substance over style

A gender race is taking over, daters and observers say, with substance gaining over style.

Andy Mill, Thomas, a 28-year-old graduate student in New York, the nature she now spends time with men who didn't show up on her radar screen before the recession.

Among them: A Ph.D. who turned out have been raised because he from an Ivy League and an employee at a marketing firm who wouldn't have made the grade because he is two years last junior.

"I figured this was the best possible time to explore other options since people's lives have been turned topsy-turvy," Thomas said.

"I think everyone is more open to finding connection given that 'the usual' has gone out the window." AP

Be ready for manual polls, too, Enrile says

Front page A1

prepared to register their post election complaints in case the vote by the first real signing of a contract with the Comelec this week.

Enrile expressed hope that the Comelec's contract with the bar finer would provide for "contingencies that could happen again between the two parties."

Calling for reconciliation, he asserted that his proclamation as "rebel is out people," Sen. Loren Legarda urged Filipinos to be vigilant.

According to her, "dark forces" who want to manipulate the polls "continue to tease the phantoms."

Senate hearing

The Senate blue ribbon committee headed by Sen. Richard Gordon was to proceed today with its hearing on poll computerization.

However, Enrile said there was no need to look into differences that had been resolved between Smartmatic and TIM or operabilities on TIM's reported close ties with Mrs. Arroyo.

He said the congressional oversight committee should monitor the automation process and supervise the problem that may crop up."

Defense secretary said that the Comelec should make a full disclosure of the Smartmatic-TIM's joint venture agreement so that the public would not be caught off guard by another corporate dispute.

"The Sen. Enrile should be made fully aware that this is not just an ordinary commercial contract, this is a contract that covers the national and democratic interests of the Filipino people. Should they fail, they should be made to pay heavily in fines and their officers be made to answer for jail," Defense said in a phone interview.

P350-M bond not enough

Defense said the P350 million performance bond was not enough to compel Smartmatic and TIM to fulfill their commitments.

"I believe that the amount should be doubled or even tripled just to make sure that they will not try with us again with their infighting. They should place that money in a reputable bank," he said.

Enrile, Legarda said Sen. Manuel Villar have asked by the Comelec to keep silent on the details of their reconciliation, but believe said that was "unacceptable."

"The problem in election, nothing should be kept secret," he said.

Senate Minn Sen. Teofisto Guingona said the Comelec should not withdraw the conflict between the partners "like a lovers' quarrel that is intended to bear."

Aside from their joint venture agreement, Comelec urged that Smartmatic make available the "source code" of its software for greater public scrutiny and to ensure transparency.

House probe to go on

The House will continue its probe of the Smartmatic-TIM fraud, despite their reconciliation, primarily claims that TIM provided the poll automation with Jose Miri Antadez and demanded P500 million from him to enable him to facilitate their partnership. Antadez has denied the allegations.

Ferdinand Rubiano, Comelec chief legal officer, said today's Senate inquiry should be a "critical" one for the poll body.

"Why should the Senate investigate something that is already fixed? Let's just celebrate," Rubiano told the lawmakers over the phone.

Rubiano also disclosed that the Comelec would create a task force, called the Project Management Office (PMO), to oversee the implementation of the automation contract.

The PMO, he said, would be headed by Comelec Executive Director Jose Tolentino Jr. with other Comelec officials as members.

Rubiano said the Comelec en banc would issue a resolution defining the roles and responsibilities of the new body in the next few days.

"This would be enough to ensure that there will be an oversight from the Comelec and first hour disagreements between TIM and Smartmatic will be resolved," he explained.

Palace hopes high

Malacañang yesterday made it clear that it had only high expectations from the Smartmatic-TIM consortium in handling the May 10 automation of Philippine elections.

Gabriel Claudio, presidential political adviser, said now that Smartmatic and TIM had resolved their differences, there should be "less bedding and crying from those only to candidates who will eventually be officers of your election officials."

In Iloilo City, Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, called for only partial automation of elections in 2010.

"My position is that automation should be tried first according to the law in a few provinces (Sen. in Mindanao, two in the Visayas, two in Luzon). In that it automates, fails in those provinces, the entire process will not suffer and put the election into doubt," Legarda said in a radio interview. Reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Marlon Ramos and Christine Y. Esguerra in Manila, and Stefer B. Bongat Jr., Inquirer Visayas

US ready to intervene to ensure clean, free RP polls

Front page A1

midst of the near-collapse last week of a project of the Comelec-led poll body and Smartmatic to automate the counting of votes to eliminate large-scale rigging of results.

The collapse was averted on Friday, when partners in the consortium that won the contract to undertake the poll automation project resolved their differences and agreed to sign a joint-venture contract under pressure from the Comelec.

Romulo's statement came a few weeks after US Defense Secretary Robert Gates visited Manila for a few hours. According to partisan reports, Gates told Pinoy officials expected elections to push through on May 2010.

Unease

Washington's unease over the uncertainty of Philippine elections has been fanned by the failed bid of President Macapagal-Arroyo's congressional allies to amend the Constitution to pave the way for a shift to the parliamentary system that would allow Mr Arroyo to extend her term beyond 2010.

Washington's interventionist mood with Gates' arrival by the fact that US President Barack Obama marked Independence Day by calling for a revival of the American "spirit" to confront and resolve problems.

"We are not a people who fear the future," Obama said. "We are a people who make it. We need to summon the same spirit that inhabited Independence Hall 233 years ago today."

Last month, the US president responded to criticism that he was too mild in reacting to the crackdowns on protests of opposition groups claiming that the hardline leader President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stole the June 12 election through massive fraud.

Obama called on the Iranian government "to stop all violent and unjust actions against innocent people and to govern in accordance with the rights of its citizens."

Ready to denounce cheaters

The tough statement indicates how far the Obama administration is ready to move to denounce measures by any regime to crush down on opposition groups being cheated in elections.

Echoing this theme, Ambassador-bound told reporters that Washington was not concerned only over the postponement of Philippine elections.

He also emphasized that Americans be forced in time elections. US officials have pointed out that in the 233 years history of the United States, it was failed to hold elections even during the Civil War.

They noted that although President Franklin D. Roosevelt served four terms, the United States imposed a two-term limit that has been followed by succeeding presidents.

The spokesman of Washington's message did not go unnoticed by the Arroyo administration. It immediately issued a statement that Mr Arroyo, who has been angling for a meeting with Obama this year, after three failed attempts.

In a statement for the embassy, Philippine-American community today they are fully with Mr Arroyo assured the US government that elections would be held as scheduled next year.

The two that bind our nations are strong. They are based on family, a shared history and a common commitment to democratic values," Mr Arroyo said.

There is doubt that the statement would reassure Washington that elections would not be postponed. It's also clear that the Obama administration will not turn a blind eye to any attempt by the Arroyo administration to enforce constitutional changes in the run-up to the elections.

Constituent assembly

The Obama administration is also expected to voice its opposition to the new by-lobbying of the two-thirds vote in the House of Representatives to vote through Congress a House resolution convening it into a constituent assembly to approve constitutional amendments for a shift to the parliamentary system.

The assembly vote bid by Mr Arroyo's allies for the elections next year is causing a lot of nervousness and political instability in the Philippines.

She has earned a pariah status in the Obama administration that had kept her at arm's length, as the US president is redesigning his foreign policy priorities and rationalizing for policy with Our Philippines.

In plain words, the Arroyo administration, which is now engulfed by corruption scandals, is under close observation in Washington and enjoys little confidence in the White House.

The Obama administration, in fact, is now focused on relations in the Philippines and to counter its anti-regimes controlling the elections, caused by less inclined than previous US administrations to intervene in the Philippines against attempts to dig the 2010 polls to extend Mrs Arroyo's stay in power.

This is why there is little US intervention in our elections. Should Mr Arroyo conspire with the 2010 elections, there are more

than enough countervailing forces that will try to thwart cheating.

Popular movements

In an electoral crisis, the United States would no doubt come to its support popular movements and launch an legitimacy from regimes close to fall.

That happened in Edsa I in 1986. Washington pulled out its support for President Marcos after it became clear that he rigged the presidential election and that people power had swept him out of Malacañang.

Obama no doubt would come in to defend the last line in the event of brutal post election crackdown on opposition groups. Without the push of repelling incursions from Malacañang.

This time, however, we are not sure if Obama would come in to the rescue to offer asylum to President Ronald Reagan did when he ordered the US Air Force to whisk Mr Marcos and family from the howling mob, and blanketed them to Hawaii.

Will Obama do that for Mr Arroyo?

Cotabato bomb explosion kills 5

From page A1

"Those who seek to sow terror and chaos, destabilize the government and constitutional order will not go unpunished," the Palace warned in a statement.

At the Vatican, Pope Benedict XVI condemned the "heinous" attack and said resorting to violence never solved anything.

"While praying to God for the victims of this heinous act, I once again condemn the recourse to violence which is never a just way to resolve existing problems," the Pope said during Angelus prayers.

Sunday's blast occurred after bomb threats and a bombing also hit parts of Metro Manila the past week, but security officials said they saw no link between the Mindanao attacks and the Metro incidents.

No group has claimed responsibility for the Cotabato explosion, Lord police did not say who was responsible, but in Manila, the military quickly blamed "rogue" members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Archbishop Orlando Quevedo had just read the Sunday gospel and was delivering his homily on the role of priests as peacemakers when the explosion coming from the nearby store set off pandemonium inside the church at about 8:40 a.m.

Among the wounded were students, still in their school uniform, who were the sponsors of the Mass.

"The explosion was so loud as if the unlimited was going in collapse," said churchgoer Merly Sandoval.

"Everybody was screaming. We saw blood coming out of those lying on the ground near the entrance in the cathedral compound," Sandoval added.

Another devotee, Isabel Jovon, said people ran toward the altar. "It was like a very loud thunderstorm and the sound reverberated inside the jam-packed cathedral," she said.

Senior Supt. Willie Gangane, city police chief, said the dead included fellow senior named Ruby Ramirez, 11-year-old Prince Allen Dino, who was the grandson of a yesteryear journalist, a soldier identified as Sgt. Ruville Collado and a man named Wade Kuhan.

Police said they failed to get the identity of the fifth fatality, an elderly woman, because Muslim relatives immediately took away her body.

Military authorities in Manila did not mention any soldier as among the dead. The Army said its list included a Cafgu (Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit) member.

There was no immediate explanation for the discrepancy in the police and military reports.

The wounded included two soldiers and four Cafgu militiamen, according to Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner said the "rogue" MILF guerrillas had deliberately targeted soldiers from the 38th Infantry Battalion, who were passing by the area allowed to win.

"We reserve say that this is a religious war. If they deliberately targeted the church, they could have placed it inside," Brawner said.

The bombing occurred 14 hours after an explosion rocked Barangay Poblacion in Datu Piang in Maguindanao, wounding three civilians.

Col. Jonathan Moyo, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division, said the Cotabato and Datu Piang bombings were connected "because the bombs had an MILF signature."

But on its website, the MILF leadership said the military was behind the bombing in Datu Piang as part of an effort to woo the Moro people against each other and lay the blame on the MILF.

Ferdinand denied reports also attributed to the military that the bomb was remotely detonated by cell phone.

He said investigators recovered no mortar fragments in the explosive device, but items of ammunition shrapnel, can was not at make.

Mayor Muslimin Sema said two men were being questioned at the headquarters of the military-led Task Force Ingle.

"One of them was seen carrying a bag [which he] left in front of a roadside lechon store," Sema said.

Witnesses, quoting bystanders, said the man who was carrying the bags, one of which he left beside the store. When seated, he hurriedly walked toward the entrance of the church.

The witnesses said a bystander checked the bag, saw an explosive device and pulled to soldiers nearby about the man heading toward the church. A K-9 dog sat on the bag and the suspect arrested.

Agnes Pirante-Pirante quoted the police as saying that the man was trying to bring another explosive into the church. *With reports from Charlie Señase, Estelle G. Fernandez and Nash B. Madtoa, Inquirer Mindanao; Christian Esguerra in Manila, AP and AFP*

140 Filipino vets get medals

From page A1

said on Friday in a Honolulu ceremony, where he and about 140 other Filipino veterans of World War II were given commemorative medals saluting their bravery in helping repel Japanese forces.

The 93-to veterans are also set to receive long-awaited benefits that the United States pledged during the war.

Some 250,000 Filipinos enlisted in 1941 to help defend the Philippines, a US commonwealth at the time. They were promised that they could become US citizens if they chose, and receive benefits under the U.S. bill.

The US Congress took away that offer in 1946 when the Philippines became an independent nation.

Congress passed legislation this year rewarding the soldiers for their service with $9,000 payments for non-US citizens and $15,000 for those with citizenship.

'Forgive us'

"I'm saddened and embarrassed that you had to wait this long," US Sen. Daniel Inouye told the assembled veterans.

"But I'm proud that my country was strong enough and big enough to admit that it was wrong and to rectify that wrong. I hope you'll forgive us."

About 18,000 Filipino veterans, many in their 80s and 90s, are still alive. Barely able to old age and disease, they die at the rate of 18 a day, officials say.

Some soldiers, like 85-year-old Arsenio Calleja, recalled how they risked their lives to advance train determining lines of attack and how they got sick of malaria and dysentery.

Calleja said his unit received a chestnut US pilot, helped recover Japanese codebooks from Yonezuki Yamashita and fought for long months in the jungles.

"We did it not for the benefits that were promised to us, but to defend our country," said Calleja, who served in the 11th Infantry Regiment, part of the Filipino Organized Guerrillas.

To rose the US and multinational presence that made us a target, [to] it was up to us to defend our freedom and territory," he said.

Calleja served in an advance unit sent to surround Yamashita's forces in Ifugao.

Former Army Cpl. Salome Calderon, who gathered intelligence during the war, said she was grateful the US government was finally paying up.

But the engraved thrusp that the checks still hadn't arrived, five months after the legislation was approved.

"They give us honors, honors, honors, and we're thankful," said Calderon, 86, the only female soldier at the event. "But we haven't received any money yet. It's always in our minds: 'How long shall we wait?'"

Calderon, of Ingoma, Bataan, was a member of a Filipino intelligence team that spied on Japanese military positions, making it easier for Allied forces to pinpoint targets during the liberation of the Philippines.

At the team's secret headquarters in Antipas, the then 17-year-old Calderon guarded intelligence reports to be transmitted to MacArthur. *Douglas Quenqua's report*

She also took care of children whose fathers had left to join the guerrillas, according to online editions of Hawaiian newspapers.

Family reunification

In addition to the money, the veterans are seeking to use of Congress will pass the family reunification act, which would exempt their sons and daughters from immigration caps. The measure is set for a hearing on July 25.

The veterans' children in the Philippines have been on the visa waiting list for years.

Of the surviving Filipino veterans, about 7,000 are US citizens living in the United States. Many have filed visa petitions for their children.

The bill will exempt some 30,000 children of veterans from the quota caps for humanitarian reasons. *Reports from AP and Inquirer staff*

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Kings surge back, take 2-1 lead

By Marlowe R. Castillo

THE COACH ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE COACHED AND THE RESULT WAS another one of those storybook come-from-behind wins by Ginebra in Game Two.

JASON HOMICRAM / Ginebra Collection
Tank—Tim Hardaway Jr. bringing Ginebra Gilas-C level of energy

Tim Hardaway Jr. did his first heroic wrestling that it was Helmsbreaker's idea to use Willie Wilkes and his bone-crushing frame.

Despite the absences of the suspended Danny Ildefonso and Marc Pingris, Siot Miguel dominated the first half en Tuesday night, 84-81 at the 22 points.

But Wilkes limited Washington to only four in the third period even as Ginebra rallied behind David Noel, who chalked up the first triple-double of his PBA career.

Noel drew 14 points, hauled down 13 rebounds and tossed 11 feeds in a masterful display of all-around brilliance that carried the Kings through and prompted Ginebra coach Jamike Jarin to declare Noel the series' 4-1 Gindoro icon in the series.

Ginebra scored 40 points in the fourth period, 14 of them coming from Noel, as the Kings easily erased a 70-76 deficit to take with plenty to spare and turn psychological advantage when the series reconvenes Wednesday.

"Finally, they were able to hold down J-Yeah," said San Miguel coach Siot Tanquingcen, who refused to attribute the loss to the one-game ban slapped on Ildefonso and Pingris for going after a brawling foe when they tied the series 1-1.

"But we basically shot ourselves in the foot when we allowed them 40 points in the fourth quarter," he added.

"The reserve wasn't J-Yeah being held down to four points in the second half. The issue is that we didn't play our defense right."

The theorizing raged to a stop-point level in the first quarter before blasting Ildefonso for 12 in the second period.

It was the highest scoring half for the series in the Resurrection, who had all but two of 40 points scoring right in the first two periods alone—and from second half of Noel's production.

Meanwhile, Dior Diaz of the Commissioner Helmsbreaker and Sentinel Santos of Burger King were among seven players named as candidates for the season-ending MVP Trophy.

Coco Cola's Asi Taulava, San Lucas's Kelly Williams, Talk N Text's Noah Cardenas, San Miguel's Danilo Ildefonso and Willie Miller of Alaska, a two-time winners are the other candidates for the honor.

The meeting will be held before Wednesday's Game 3.

Taulava, Williams, Helmsbreaker, Ildefonso and Cardenas were the top five players in the statistical points race through the semifinal round of the Fiesta Conference.

Though failing to make the top five in the stats race, Miller and Helmsbreaker also became MVP contenders because Miller was the Philippine Cup MVP, and Helmsbreaker was the main leader of his team, which made the Fiesta Conference finals.

The scores:

GINEBRA 84—Noel 22, Mark 16, Tyler 12, Hugnes 12, Ildefonso 11, Helmsbreaker 2, Wilkes 2, Cardenas 2, Hodge 2, Reyes 2, Ayaay 0, Ayaay 0, Ayaay 0

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Editor Alejandro S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

IN 1935, a congressional bill authorizing to merge Quezon City and Manila into a city to be called Rizal. The bill, however, was not signed into law.
Cyril L. Bonalos Jayme-Ilusorio

4 charged in attack on Ateneo student

Police eye fraternity-related squabble as motive for beating, shooting

By Allison W. Lopez

FOUR LAW STUDENTS ACCUSED OF MAULING and shooting a fellow law student were charged with frustrated murder by the police yesterday at the Makati City Prosecutors Office.

Insp. Teresa Dizo of the Makati Police Department identified the four as Mark Bryan Magno and his brother, Mark Lester, both residents of Fillwood, Quezon City; Gaelor Lim, of Pilar Village, Las Piñas; and Enrich Echeza, of Valle Verde Mandaluyong in Pasig City.

Mark Bryan and Echeza are schoolmates of the victim, Jess Albert Phillipe Pangeng, 20, who is a second year student of the Ateneo de Manila Law School in Rockwell Center, Makati.

Mark Lester and Lim, on the other hand, are taking up law at Lyceum of the Philippines University.

Among the four, only Mark Bryan is in the custody of the Makati police. He was turned for questioning on Saturday.

Based on a police report, the four beat up Pangeng as he was about to enter Mr. Issaclaig house on Palma Street in Barangay Poblacion, Makati, at around 10:45 p.m. on Friday.

One of them then shot him in the groin although the police said the victim have yet to identify the gunman.

Pangeng was later treated at the Makati Medical Center for a gunshot wound and several cuts on the head.

The victim said in his affidavit that he was opening the gate to his boarding house on Palma Street, Barangay Poblacion, Makati City when two motorcycling bystanders came up from behind him and hit him with clubs.

He added that he fought back and that he recognized his assailants as Mark Lester and Lim after he managed to rip off their helmets.

Pangeng said that at this point, Mark Bryan and Echeza joined the boy and started pushing him inside a Toyota RAV4.

He added that a "dark-colored man in a black jacket" began pulling him inside the sport utility vehicle as he continued to resist.

Pangeng said that as he pulled at the unidentified man's jacket, he "saw a spark" and realized that he had been shot.

His attackers then fled on board the SUV. As he sought help from people inside the boarding house,

» EMERGENCY, A 16

CITY LIGHTS A taxi cab makes its way through Roxas Boulevard in Manila, past newly installed colorful lamp posts that make the night scene brighter. Inset: the new lamp

Woman killed, 8 injured as speeding jeep hits post

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A WOMAN WAS KILLED AND EIGHT OTHER people were hurt when a passenger jeepney rammed into a concrete electrical post at the corner of Bagtikan Avenue and Bristol Street in Lupa, Novaliches, Quezon City, early morning yesterday.

"The driver could have lost control of his vehicle and based on the impact, the vehicle was probably speeding," Supt. Nadir Valverde, head of the Quezon City Police District's Traffic Enforcement Group, told the Inquirer.

Valverde said the accident took place at around 4:00 a.m.

"When the streets are usually empty and the tendency of their drivers is to go faster."

He added that the impact also caused the electrical post to fall down.

Traffic investigators said the nine passengers were on board the jeepney (TPVE 811) headed for Commonwealth Avenue when the accident took place.

Responders rushed the victims to the East Avenue Medical Center where Sarah Andrade, 30, a resident of Bulalacao Street in Quezon City, was declared dead on arrival due to head injuries.

The jeepney driver, Raul Bagos, 39, sustained a cut on the head and other wounds, investigators added.

The other passengers—David Gumbaoc, 62; Elias Santos, 22; Raul Bagos, 11; Leonardo Concepcion, 23; Randi Abdurasan, 31; Hazael Rilo, 30; and Tito Conde, 40,—were allowed to go home after receiving first aid.

Valverde said they were delaying the filing of charges against the jeepney driver until their complete facts into the accident.

"We have to know what happened and if it's proven he was at fault, he would be charged with reckless imprudence resulting to homicide and physical injuries," he added.

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3. Promo period is from 20 June to 7 July 2009

Group vows to protect environment, oppose dump

By DJ Yap

A NEW COALITION OF CONSUMPTION recently headed and residents of San Mateo, Rizal, has expressed its opposition to the operations of the controversial landfill in the town, over allegations of environmental violations.

The newly created "Alyansa Laban sa Timbakan ng Basura sa San Mateo" (or easily said is in Metro Manila) manages to formally voice their objections to the project, which the group claims is located in a protected forest area.

"We want you to know that we strongly oppose the [Municipal] operations in our municipality, as it gravely threatens our natural resources and the environment and without a doubt endangers the lives of our families, most especially our children," the group said.

"It is our officials who should be setting the example for us, citizens, yet now it is us who have to take our voices to proper remaining government officials that they have been remiss in and negligent of their duties," it added.

Recently, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources gave the landfill operator the go-signal to operate the facility despite the allegations of environmental violations by environmentalists.

The group fears the landfill would be used as the dumping ground not only of wastes from the town and neighboring municipalities but also Metro Manila, which used to dump a portion of its garbage on a smaller landfill in the town which the Supreme Court had ordered shut in 2005.

The environment groups, including EcoWaste Coalition and Pilipenet, whose own investors is developing the area were affected, argue that the landfill project is beside a protected forest area, a claim that the developer and town officials are disputing.

The dispute has reached the San Mateo Regional Trial Court, as Pilipenet and EcoWaste filed a petition for preliminary injunction against the project. The court previously ruled against issuing a temporary restraining order on the project after it found no urgent reason to do so.

"We will never as the protectors of our environment, and as mother nature's wards, we will remain steadfast in our advocacy to prevent further degradation of our community and to guard the future of our families," the group said.

The coalition is composed of members of the Coalition for a Healthy Para Sa San Mateo, as well as various homeowners associations, church and various barangays.

Citizen's call

Eateries and jeepney terminals in UP Village

WHY IS IT that UP Village officials are turning a blind eye on passenger jeepneys using Mayaman Street as their parking area. This is brought about the proliferation of eateries on the sidewalks of Mahusay and Masaya Streets, inconveniencing both pedestrians and motorists. Can't the Village Association of our residents do something about?

—MELVIN, 34, UP Village, Quezon City

Leaking water pipe

THERE'S a leaking water pipe on Sct Merlito Avenue corner Kamias (Diretso ilan kanto Mahusay). Hope Maynilad can check this out.

—WEL, 47, Quezon City

'Habal-habal' driver airs side

[ED.'s Note: Maybe we can have a word with the habal-habal driver.]

Driver, you are not the only habal-habal. Working pa ang mga habal-habal ko kahit Sunday. Sinisikap ng mga habal-habal kong kumita. Kahit ang mga motorcycle na may plaka ay nakikipagsabayan na rin sa habal-habal. Midnight na 'yan, driver, pero kami at iba pang mga habal-habal ay nagsisipagtrabaho. Minsan walang pasahero pero ang mga motorcycle may pasahero sa Mr. Mom Store. Sana ang mga traffic enforcer ay huwag manghuli ng mga habal-habal. Kung may violation ang habal-habal, dapat ay sa motorcycle din. Sana ay maging maayos ang ating samahan.

—ROGELIO, 38, Habal-habal driver, Quezon City

Unpleasant sight, smell

PLEASE help us get rid of those people who smoke on the sidewalk to the left of McDonald's and 7-Eleven on Timog and Agila streets. They don't present a delightful sight and smell on our way to work every day.

—ERNESTO, 38, Makati City

Missing traffic light

PARDEE? Perhaps that's how good your traffic light is now. Do the Highway Dangerous Monitoring Division, Quezon City, Sirena ang mga tao? Is Julian Aunor area no longer traffic? Please look into why the traffic light at Del Pan Highway-Tangos North is not working since last week. Since the blackout, traffic in the area has been heavy almost every day.

—RONNIE, 30, Navotas City

Bleed corner

ATTENTION, MMDA: There is a bleed corner of Bonifacio corner Sto. Rosa Street in Monumento, Caloocan City. Drivers should look out for corners of the intersection, as area prone to accidents.

—JUN, 47, Monumento, Caloocan City

Traffic-prone intersection

I WONDER why my post-July Mass thanksgiving prayer for no traffic violations during the Traslacion was not answered. Re-surfacing for a year during last dinner no person was apprehended. I want to complain about how that was done. There were no flares, no cones, no signages, no traffic enforcers. Is it because it's not an important procession? Kung ganoon, sana sinabi na lang nila para hindi na kami nagpuyat sa pagbabantay sa kanto namin.

—JUN BATOR, 41, Pangasinan

TRAFFIC-STOPPERS

Mark, 29, of EDSA Kamuning, Quezon City, writes: "Every day traffic does slow down approaching Commonwealth. However due to the tricycle at Elliptical Heights which is parked by the side of the road. Can the city government give them a better terminal?"

Timawa. Part of the passageway is too narrow. It caused to accidents if this is not addressed properly, especially when there are a lot of people using the overpass.

—JUN BATOR, 41, Pangasinan

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—JUN BATOR, 41, Pangasinan

MetroBriefs

Man robs money transfer shop in mall

A LONE robber fled with an undetermined amount of cash after he held up a money transfer establishment inside a mall in Mandaluyong City yesterday. SPO1 Leighton Gonzales, desk officer of the Police Community Precinct 2 in Addition, said the Western Union branch in Starmall was robbed at around 12:15 p.m. yesterday. Gonzales said Marcos Salita, 30, told police that she was manning the counter when a man pointed a stainless pointed a gun at her. Since she was alone and the establishment did not have a security guard, Salita said she had no choice but to give the robber all the cash she had in the drawer. Salita then asked for help from the security guards but they said they were tied. Added if she could describe the robber, Salita said she only remembered that the man had a mole on his left cheek. Gonzales said the case will be turned over to the Mandaluyong criminal investigation division.

—Allison M. Lopez

Still no leads in immigration agent's killing

ALTHOUGH police said they were focusing on the robbery angle, the murder of immigration agent, Douglas Duazo Jr., said they could not think of any reason for someone to kill him. "We don't have any friends and colleagues but no one could say if he had received any threats or had a quarrel with anyone," Dr. Jaime Lim, the victim's father, told Philippine Daily Inquirer on Interview. Duazo, 34, was shot dead at around 1:30 a.m. on June 28, at the garage of their house in Project 8, Quezon City. His attackers also took the Ford Expedition he was driving. The doctor said he wanted to know who his son was with before he was killed. "We want to know his last activities and companions to give us an idea of his last thoughts," he added. According to him, his son-in-law Jerome Ilao was scheduled to take an July 27 test but his family was cooperating with the police to determine the motive for his son's killing, and to identify his attackers. Supt. Gil Lirio Nebrida, Quezon City Police District's criminal investigation and detection unit head, said they still had no suspects, but were investigating all possibilities.

—Nancy C. Carvajal

Concert for a cause on July 12

THE FAMILY and friends of Leo Bautista, former vocalist/bassist of the Eraserheads and Rebo bands, will stage a benefit concert dubbed as "The Name of Love" on July 12 at the OPEN GUITAR Restaurant on Timog Avenue, Quezon City. Bautista is undergoing radiation treatment and physical and chemotherapies for cancer of the brain. The concert will feature Mates de Guzman, Joy Nicolas, Ruth Cuesta, Arcade Sunset, Arthur Miranda, Jo-ann Bacal, Christine Flores-Escudero, Michelle de Guzman, MC Darry, Jordan Ridaro, Pinagsamahan Jazz Group and the RB 80s bands. The 4:00pm to midnight show requires a cover charge of P1,000 for reservations, call Jimmy at 0917-5027 and 0917-811-9968 / Jerome at 0908-2786758 and Jeff at 0915-9067858.

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4 charged in attack on Ateneo student

Front page A12

Cha said a security guard at a mall by could not issue any ticket on the standing and observing incident.

Asked if he knew why he was attacked, Pangan said investigators that he had no idea.

The Makati police, though, is looking into the possibility that the incident could be related to a hit-and-run related incident.

Cha, meanwhile, urged the motor vehicle operators to exercise due diligence in driving and avoid committing violations that could lead to accidents.

Former street kids rediscover self-worth in empty water bottles

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE AQUARIUMPHONE Ready to dazzle audiences with their instruments.

PAUL ZALLETA: "I want the children to feel a sense of ownership."

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One week after coup, tensions in Honduras at breaking point

SUPPORTERS of ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya face off with soldiers and police near the entrance of the international airport in Tegucigalpa on July 4.

TEGUCIGALPA—A week after Central America's first coup in more than a quarter of a century, tensions were at breaking point in the Central American nation as ousted President Manuel Zelaya planned to return.

The country's interim leaders were more militant than ever in the face of growing isolation and public anger, apparently set on staying put until November elections despite threats in aid, withdrawal of foreign ambassadors and temporary travel bloc bans.

The Organization of American States suspended Honduras late Saturday, in the first such move since the explosion of Cuba in 1962, adding to the growing international pressure.

"Whether the coup government holds out will depend largely on the response of the international community—the government would not withstand real economic sanctions, for example," said Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington.

Despite previous warnings over Zelaya's bid to change the constitution, many were taken by surprise when soldiers actually packed him on a plane last Sunday, bolstering that Central America had turned a page on an painful part of bloody US-backed coups.

The move sparked a wave of outrage, making countries from its new leftist ally Venezuela to its traditional economic and military backer the United States.

The interim government insisted that the president had created the law by attempting to go ahead with a referendum last Sunday after the Supreme Court ruled against it.

But they failed to convince foreign governments that the coup was a correct, constitutional succession.

"I think it would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition, rather than democratic elections," US President Barack Obama said afterward.

But Brendan Honduras has been governed by a group of wealthy families, in which Zelaya belongs.

But after Zelaya's election as a center-right politician in 2005, he took a sharp turn to the left —leading the impoverished nation closer to leftist Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

It was a move that included preferential oil deals.

Zelaya's campaign to rewrite the constitution sparked concern that he would follow Chavez's lead and try to remove term limits.

His only had seven months to go on the move to oust him, demonstrators a certain amount of desperation on the part of a political elite in Honduras," said Miguel Tinker Salas, a Latin America analyst from Pomona College in California.

Many say the ruling elite miscalculated how far the coup would polarize their own country. AFP

Americans challenging property tax bills

NEW YORK—HOMEOWNERS across the United States are challenging their property tax bills in droves as the value of their homes drop, threatening local governments with another big crisis on their budgets.

The requests are coming in record numbers, from owners of $1.9 million estates and one-bedroom bungalows, from residents of the high-tax suburbs surrounding New York City, and from the sprawl in the Rust Belt and states like Arizona, Florida and California, where whole communities have devastated by the housing bust.

"It's worthy of a Dickens movie," said Jim Kramer, the assessor for Contra Costa County, Calif., east of San Francisco. "These people are desperate."

The tax appeals and measures mean many cannot a new budget nightmare for governments. In a survey conducted by the National Association of Counties, 78 percent of large counties said that falling property tax revenue was significantly affecting their budgets.

Officials in many states say their property tax revenue is falling for the first time since World War II.

The recession has already taken a significant toll on states' budgets, as rising joblessness, a weak business climate and a drop in consumer demand have led to sharply less receipts from taxes on sales, personal income and business earnings. AFP

Taliban cash in on Pakistan's untapped gem wealth

By Charlotte Gibson

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—In the narrow lanes of a market in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar, dealers squat on carpets and spread out a rainbow of precious gems on the floor for potential buyers.

Chunks of bright blue lapis lazuli, and rough rocks studded with flecks of light and ruby clusters outshone displays, but no one is buying in a city hit by a wave of deadly bombings blamed on Taliban militants.

A treasure trove of precious stones is looked in the rocks of Pakistan's rugged northwest. Violence, legal tussles and state incompetence have delayed investors but allowed the Taliban to cash in on the bounty, dealers say.

"God has given us enormous wealth in terms of emeralds from Swat, rubies, pink topaz, beautiful tourmaline," said Ejaz Ali Shah, a gemologist with the government-run Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company.

Shah said that if Pakistan properly mines these deposits, the impoverished country could receive its hefty foreign debt "But we need peace."

In February the area, in Swat's extremist valley, saw a bloody insurgency to expand control operations showcased emerald mines in the northwest Swat valley caused the most town Mingora and nearby villages to close down.

The military says it has cleared all Swat mines from the Taliban during a three offensive, but for at least three months production from emerald sales lured the rebels' coffers and helped finance offline insurgency.

Police would declare the emeralds and Swat would become ready for every Sunday" said Ashar al Islam, a 44-year-old gem trader from Swat. "The profits were divided up—two-thirds for the miners and one-third for the Taliban."

Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan are believed to hold up to 30-40 per cent of the world's emerald deposits. Shah says, with the previous mines for fixing up to $2,000 per carat depending on quality.

Ashar said AFP the Taliban earned about four million rupees ($50,000) a week from Mingora's mine, mine—that stayed since 1995 because of a legal battle—money he said was spent on "buying explosives and weapons."

"I was frightened what would happen if the government re-established control, so I didn't buy those emeralds from the miners, but most of my friends bought those emeralds from the Taliban," he said.

At the Sunday Mandi market in Peshawar, another dealer from Swat area did not want to be named estimated that the whole trade between five and six million rupees a week from the mines.

But the war in the troubled would admit buying from emeralds from the Taliban, but most of my

GEMS displayed at a processing plant in Peshawar on July 1.

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as said he pressure gems garnet from a Taliban-owned mine near the border in Afghanistan, where the militants are also "smuggling opium."

"We don't like the Taliban, we don't buy it because we want to help them, but we want the stones," 30-year-old Ali Akbar said.

He says his business has been crippled by fighting insecurity in Pakistan since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States drove the violence-wracked nation into the heart of the "war on terror."

"For five months I had no customers," he said.

Shah says Pakistan's gem-industry profits have plunged up to 50 percent in one year because of the instability, with Foreign investors staying away.

Many of the country's gems, including emeralds, jade, pink topaz, spinel and tourmaline, line are located underground in North West Frontier Province (NWFP), the heartland of the Taliban insurgency.

Experts say the Soviet-style development of the area—which is a mountainous area largely outside government control along the Afghan border and stronghold of Pakistani Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud—hides deposits of rare quartz and precious stones.

"I think we have explored three percent of the whole of NWFP. We have large areas of Pata that are not under control, we are have a lot of precious materials," undisputed "which needs to be explored and explained," Shah said. AFP

Palin links resignation to a 'higher calling'

REPUBLICAN presidential candidate Sen. John McCain, left, and his running mate, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, in an Aug. 29, 2008 photo.

JUNEAU, ALASKA—OUTGOING Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin has laid the groundwork to take on a larger, national role after leaving office next summer, citing a "higher calling" with the aim of uniting the country along conservative lines.

A day after surprising even her closest friends by announcing she would step down as governor more than a year before her term was up, the controversial hockey mom was still keeping details of her future plans under wraps.

But in a statement posted Saturday on Palin's Facebook page and Twitter site, the high-profile Republican said she planned to push at the margin at the end of the month.

"I'm now looking ahead and here are some reflections this country's political class where it lives government intervention, greater energy independence, stronger national security and much-needed fiscal restraint," she said.

Palin also cited herself as a victim and blamed the media, calling the response to her announcement "predictable" and not of touch.

"How sad that Washington and the media will never understand, it's about country," the statement said. "And though it's honorable for countless others to leave their positions for a higher calling and without fanfare, it seems, of course, we have to have it's time, for some reason a different standard applies for the decision I make."

The abruptness of her announcement and the mystery surrounding her plans has fuelled widespread speculation. But Palin attorney Thomas Van Flein on Saturday vowed legal action may be taken against Huggins and publications that repeat what he calls fraudulent claims.

"In the recent several weeks, most notably blasted Alaska blogger Shoshana Bloom, are now claiming to 'feel' that Gov. Palin resigned because she is under federal investigation for misconduct or other crimes, and to complicate matters, we will be exploring legal options this week to address such defamation," Van Flein said in a statement. "This is to provide notice to Ms. Bloom, her associates, other media or public who the defamation, such as Huffington Post, MSNBC, the New York Times and The Washington Post, that the Palin will not allow them to propagate defamatory material without answering to that in a court of law."

With only a few weeks before the reign down on July 26, and Lt. Gov. Sean Parnell takes her place, the governor spent the Fourth of July weekend in the state capital, Anyon, but we only spotted briefly on the sidelines of the city's parade.

She had been mum on what is a controversy, so she did last year, but never told reporters whether she would attend.

Juneau parade director Joan Senak said officials drew up lanyards for Gov. Palin showed and was willing to take part.

As the last of the parade's drums and marching bands finished past her, Palin gave no Palin. "What governor wants to be in the end of the parade?" she asked.

Also, Palin McCain didn't rule out a return to politics for his former running mate, saying Saturday he believes "she will continue to play an important leadership role in the Republican Party and our nation." AP

Coroner: US teen 5th killed by serial killer

POLICE shoot at the suspected serial killer in Cherokee County, South Carolina.

GAFFNEY, SOUTH CAROLINA—A teenage girl shot while helping her father in their family's small furniture and appliance store died Saturday, becoming the fifth victim of a suspected serial killer terrorizing a small South Carolina community, police said.

Abby Tyler, 15, died about 11:15 a.m. at a Spartanburg hospital after fighting for her life for two days, Cherokee County Coroner Dennis Powell said.

Tyler was wounded and her father was killed Thursday as they worked to clear the Tyler Home Center store for customers.

County Sheriff Bill Hutton said investigators believe the killings are linked and the murders are for a suspected male serial killer the 41-year-old mother and her daughter were shot to death Wednesday, and a 60-year-old porch fencer was found dead at his home on Saturday.

Hutton said all the victims were shot, but he would not say how the deaths were linked. The shootings also caused within about 16 local each other in Cherokee County, a rural community of 54,000 people. All are white, except for one woman. All but one was 40 or older.

Deputies in the area, state and federal investigators were assigned to the case when the killings were linked. But a day later, the killer struck again, killing 46-year-old Sophia Tyler and her daughter.

visited door-to-door canvass to stop knocking and anyone who broke down on the county's rural roads to contact police immediately for help because he was sure "people are going to start shooting at strangers."

The killings began a week ago Saturday when the body of 52-year-old Sandra Kinney Elder Cook found bullet shell shot inside. Then late Wednesday afternoon, found 40-year-old Heidi Linder and her 40-year-old daughter, Irene Linder Pirkle, found and shot to death in a separate shooting in Linder's home.

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ocampo

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Il

N. Korea boasts of military might after missile launches

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA SCORNFULLY hailed the strength of its military after it launched a salvo of ballistic missiles in a show of firepower that earned international criticism.

In a commentary, the ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun praised Pyongyang's "army-first policy," which gave North Korea the capacity to hit enemies with what it called a "myriad of fire."

"Our defense industry... laid a firm foundation to produce any kind of (weapons) needed for modern warfare freely," became of the policy, the newspaper said.

The missiles—which the North is banned from firing under UN resolutions—were launched into the Sea of Japan (East Sea) on Saturday in an act of defiance apparently timed for the US Independence Day holiday.

They further fueled regional tensions already high following leader Kim Jong Il's apparent test to nuclear test in May.

The launches come as Washington seeks support for tough enforcement of United Nations sanctions aimed at starving down Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs.

It was the biggest salvo of ballistic weaponry since the North fired a long-range Taepodong-2 and six smaller missiles on US Independence Day in 2006.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said they had a range of between 400 and 500 km but declined to say what type they were. Rodong news agency said they were either Scud- or Rodong-1 missiles whose maximum range of 1,300 km had been demonstrated.

The North on Thursday test-fired four short-range missiles with a range of 120 km into the Sea of Japan.

Saturday's launches were seen as more provocative since the missiles could potentially reach most of South Korea, and possibly parts of Japan.

The North has also apparently improved the accuracy of its missiles, an unidentified official told Yonhap, with five out of the seven hitting the target area after travelling about 450 km.

"Three of the seven missiles fired had an unusually high velocity that makes us believe they could have been Nodong missiles that had their flight distances shortened," the official was quoted as saying.

The North has about 800 Scuds, plus 200 Nodong-1 missiles which could reach Tokyo.

Professor Kim Yong-Hyun of Seoul's Dongguk University said the launches were designed to demonstrate the country's improved missile capacity.

"The weekend's silver-stalling, apparently designed to demonstrate the country's improved missile capacity and military firepower, produced its intended effect," he said.

Washington's relatively mild reaction showed US officials do not want "a circumscribe confrontation with North Korea or heightened regional tensions," he added.

The US State Department urged Pyongyang not to "aggravate tensions" and called the launches "not helpful." AFP

REAL-TIME UPDATES ARE A BELLYFUL OF BUTTERFLIES
Posted status: "Waiting in the blind date." One message received: "Slightly lost. Which cafe again?" Take photo of sign stating 5.8 megapixel camera with Carl Zeiss lenses. Where's that Airborne Access hotspot...there. Where. Email pic via Ovi Mail. Feel excited. Look for possible conversation starters on Inquirer.net. Feel nervous. Download game from Ovi Store. Kill time. High score.
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UN's Ban ends trip to Burma empty-handed

RANGOON—SECRETARY GENERAL BAN Ki-moon boarded home empty-handed from a trip to Burma (Myanmar) on Sunday after the ruling junta brazenly snubbed his attempts to visit pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi.

Ban departed with a mere exhale for military ruler Than Shwe, saying that the exclusive general had missed an opportunity to show the regime's commitment to its pledge to hold elections in 2010.

Ban, his failure to extract even the smallest concession from the iron-fisted regime plays into the hands of critics, who warned him against sticking to the same line on Aung San Suu Kyi facing an incontrovertibly condemned trial.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

The UN chief admitted that he was "deeply disappointed" by Than Shwe's intransigence over visiting the Nobel Peace laureate. He said even kept smiling overnight in the capital Naypyidaw Friday to hear about the refusal.

He said being able to visit her would have been an "important symbol of the government's willingness to embark on this kind of meaningful engagement that will be mutually beneficial if the election of 2010 are to be seen as credible."

Than Shwe had told Ban UN chief that he could not visit Aung San Suu Kyi in prison because she was still on trial for breaching the terms of her house arrest after a US intruder was convicted to her lakeside home in May, he said.

Ban thus defended himself against criticism that the two-day trip was fruitless, saying that the junta chief had not rejected any of his other proposals for reform including the release of political prisoners. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Younger Williams bags 3rd Wimbledon crown /A32

SPORTS

Editor Rodolfa S. Mañalac • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

'Pacman will destroy Cotto at 145'

ANTONIO MARGARITO, WITH A LOT of time and no more illegal substances in his hands, says the Manny Pacquiao-Miguel Cotto fight scheduled on Nov. 14 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas will likely be a replay of another fight held at the same venue in December 2008.

That is, Margarito says, if Cotto agrees to the catch weight being proposed for fight night.

"From the very first round," Margarito told Boxingscene.com, "the referee (sic) would be telling me, 'Don't hit low,' and Pacquiao became Cotto would be clobbered like Oscar De La Hoya."

Pacquiao demolished boxing icon De La Hoya in eight rounds at the MGM Grand in Dec. 6 last year, which several people saying that the Golden Boy was too debilitated to put up a fight against the tenacious Pinoy.

And with the Pacquiao-Cotto fight rumored carrying stipulations for a catch weight, Margarito said the Puerto Rican reigning WBO light welterweight champion, who is yesterday's title on the line, will be at a big disadvantage.

"I think Cotto is giving up too many advantages to Pacquiao if the fight is done at 145 lbs. even more if the fight were to happen at 143 like Pacquiao wants," Margarito added.

Margarito is currently serving out a suspension for fighting with illegal substances in his hand wraps in a January fight with Shane Mosley this year which Mosley won.

Pacquiao was supposed to receive the initial contract for the fight from boxing adviser Michael Koncz yesterday and then make a concrete offer. But from all indications, the Pacquiao-Cotto fight is already a go. *Francis T.J. Ochoa*

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER Barangay Ginebra's 6-foot-1 guard Ronald Tubid battles for rebounding position against San Miguel's 6-foot-5 center Dorian Pena in Game 3 of their Fiesta Conference PBA championship last night at the Araneta Coliseum. See story on Late Sports, Page A33.

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REVILLA: Out for rest of season

Archer Revilla sidelined due to illness

By Jasmine W. Payo

A LEGENDARY ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOLASTIC a young La Salle cager owes before the start of the UAAP season.

Ed Revilla, the Green Archers' flashy sophomore guard, is out of the men's basketball competition following a recent diagnosis of cholesterol and hypertriveridaes coupled with a bout with dengue.

"My doctor didn't allow me to play and do any strenuous activities because my blood might collapse," Revilla told the Inquirer.

"I tried to bargain with the doctor. At first they said I might miss a few games and maybe in a month I'll be OK. But they told me just last Monday that I'll be out for the rest of the season."

The 19-year-old Revilla, who played quality minutes in his rookie season in a backup point guard, lost almost 30 pounds in the last three months.

"I'm now taking medication," he said. "I injects myself with insulin every day. Every pre-meal, I check my blood. I'm taking medication for my thyroid. I also have a special diet."

Revilla, named in the All-Rookie Team last year, admits that a year off the floor will may lead to a dip in his performance.

"Of course I'm worried," the 5-foot-7 cager said. "I can't join our practice. I can't do weights. But I'm going to ask my doctors if I can go swimming, so at least I can have some form of exercise."

Despite his illness, Revilla said he makes sure to keep the La Salle games in his system.

"I watch the team's practice. I still attend team functions and I still try to do my normal activities," he said. "I've accepted it. I'm a strong believer that God have a plan and a purpose."

Revilla said he intends to watch the Green Archers' games, including their opener against the University of the East Warriors on July 11 at 4 p.m. in the Araneta Coliseum.

The Green Archers will also miss the 6-foot-6 Mario Bartolome due to a leg injury. Last season, the fearless center played only five games due to a recurring injury on his anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).

But the Warriors will also play minus the veteran James Martinez, the mainstay of Coach Jamike Jarin's outmanned ADU. injury during a preseason game last month.

Before the La Salle-UE showdown, Ateneo '72 officially kicks off with a 1 p.m. opening ceremony, followed by the 2 p.m. match between University of Santo Tomas and Adamson.

Ateneo takes on the Tamaraw forward-up to the 4 p.m. main game the next day also at the Big Dome, right after the 2 p.m. duel between the University of the Philippines and National University.

Red Lions test amazing Chiefs today

By Cedelf P. Tupas

ARELLANO HOPES TO CONTINUE ITS surprising run when the Chiefs make their midseason reward against the defending champions San Beda Lions today in the 83th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the HIGH Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Gametime is at 4 p.m. with the Chiefs, one of three giant teams this season, aiming to follow up their stunning back-to-back wins against Emilio Aguinaldo College and Lyceum.

Clashing in the first game at 2 p.m. are semifinal giant teams Angeles University Foundation and JOAC.

Arellano coach Jorjie Aldus believes the clash with the Red Lions will be their toughest this season.

"We need to work twice, maybe thrice than we did to our first two wins for us to beat San Beda," said Aldus, whose squad whipped JOAC, 80-62, last Monday and Letran, 81-73.

Hefty center Diorgie Cabanesa and ace shooter Adrian Celada have been instrumental in the Chiefs' first early season form.

Cabanesa averaged 15 points, 6.5 rebounds, two blocks, two assists and two steals in two games even as Celada, a 1996 veteran, summed 16.3 points and six boards.

Star Bedz coach Franklin Lois said the Lions cannot take the Chiefs lightly.

"We know they're capable of beating big teams," Lois said.

The Red Lions bowed to the Jose Rizal Heritage Stags, 77-65, Wednesday after drubbing the Mapua Cardinals, 85-52, on opening day last June 27.

San Beda is hoping to squeeze the best out of 6-foot-8 shutdown recruit Ibrahim Daniel, who has made little impact on the offense. Daniel, though, tallied nine blocks in the first two games.

Both the Perpetuo-based Great Danes and the Generals are coming off two-sided losses. The Great Danes stalled the St. Benilde Blazers for three quarters before yielding, 78-67.

ARELLANO ace Adrian Celada (left) tries to thwart Argel Morales of EAC in a recent game won by the Chiefs.

Gonzales, Laylo crush foes, share Open lead

GONZALES

Keeping badminton interest alive

Sir Samuel

Supreme Court: PBA liable to pay GAB

Manolo R. Mejia

Leadership logjam in Tuguegarao Shell Active Chess leg

Mighty Chinese put away 4 of 5 RP Open crowns

By Marc Anthony Reyes

CHINA'S Wang Xiaoli delivers her victory. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SUPREME BADMINTON POWER CHINA—LED BY A YOUNG, UNranked qualifier—dominated the Ricoh Resonance Philippine Grand Prix Gold championships at the Philsports Arena in Pasig.

Wang Xin, a 20-year-old member of China's Team B, stole the thunder from veteran singles world No. 1 Zhou Mi of Hong Kong to cop a four-tournament romp for the Chinese out of this event in the week-long tournament.

Wang captured her first major championship in the four-star event after a stunning 21-18, 13-21, 23-21 triumph over the Hong Kong top seed in the finals.

She pocketed the hefty share of $9,000 (P422,730), while the runner-up Zhou, who was coming off a victory in a tough super tournament in Singapore, went home with $4,200.

Fourteen world junior champion Chen Long crushed dong Jiong's Hu Yun, 21-15, 21-6, to capture the men's singles crown.

Three-time Olympic gold medalist Gao Ling and new partner Wei Yili were just as devastating in whipping Indonesia's Shendy Puspa Irawati and Meiliana Jauhari in the women's doubles finals, 21-11, 21-11.

But the all-Chinese control doubles title duel proved more entertaining with Zhang Nan and Lu Lai pulling out a tight 21-10, 21-19 victory over Chen Zhiben and Zhang Jiewang.

The only division that didn't have a Chinese entry became an all-Indonesian affair with the top combination of Muhammad Ahsan and Bona Septano turning back Alvent Yulianto Chandra and Hendra Aprida Gunawan, 3-1 (21, 11-14, 21-17, for the men's doubles crown.

Best RP performances

The Philippines' best bets—Mistelynn Asia Alcala in ladies' singles and the men's doubles tandem Bebelo Pangandaman and Gabriel Villanueva—could only reach the quarterfinals after bowing lelbo to Philippine entries.

Indonesians Tri Kusharjanto and long-time Manila resident Minarti Timur had a great start after beating top seeds Yohan Hadikusumo and Cathy Ho Peh—of Hong Kong in Chinese doubles but also failed to make the semifinals.

After splitting the first two sets, the 5-foot-6 Wang and the 20-year-old, 6-foot-1 Zhou waged a thrilling battle in the third set to the delight of the appreciative crowd.

THE CHAMPION women's doubles pair of Gao Ling and Wei Yili re-against Indonesians Shendy Puspa Irawati and Meiliana Jauhers. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Wang zoomed ahead at 11-4 with superb drop shots but committed a rash of errors, allowing Zhou to close her way back and even knot, 18-17, after nifty finds to track numbers.

Keeping her composure to the race for the all-important two-point lead, Wang smashed the defending champion's looping return for 22-21 and three-finished the championship with a crafty shot to Zhou's wider body which her rival couldn't handle.

AY Games medal eludes Pinoys again

By Jane Nicanor

SINGAPORE—THREE SWIMMERS settled for outright nine to the Youth Olympic Games next year in the Philippines, with only a jumbo driver to show for the suffered another medal-shutout Sunday at the Asian Youth Games here.

Jasmine Alkhaldi and Bernie King Lacuesta smashed the qualifying time in the 200-meter freestyle while Jessie Beza matched that feat in the 200-meter individual medley to cop slots in the Youth Olympics to be hosted next year by this island nation.

Alkhaldi surpassed the qualifying time of 1:00.13 only a 59.07-second route in the girls' 100 free while Lacuesta, who also broke former national team Beza in the Tasse aquatics Center in Laguna, booked his second event in the Olympic ceremony of the Singapore Sports School here.

A perennial Palaro mythbreaker gold medalist, Lacuesta clocked 53.47 seconds to meet the qualifying mark of 53.50 seconds and advance to the semifinals of the boys' 100 free relay later last night along with Alkhaldi.

The 15-year-old Iron Baluyot only finished the finals in the Youth Olympics three months ago during the national tryouts at Tiaco when he met the standard in the 200m free.

"I want to win a medal, so I will try my best to qualify in the finals," said Lacuesta, one of the most promising youngsters in the national pool.

THE PHILIPPINES' Jessie Alkhaldi clears her way to 7th spot in the 100m free. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Alkhaldi, 16, ended up seventh in the heat topped by Indonesian Triadriskhaer of Kazakhstan (57.07), Singapore's Ting Wey Quah (59.02) and Xiang Qi Amanda Lin (59.03) while Lacuesta was fourth in the preliminaries of the event ruled by India's Aaron Ajmal Hosain (52.07).

Alkhaldi's 27.59 clocking allowed her to compete in the 50m free finals late last night. Singapore's Xiang Qi Amanda Lin (25.91) and Tin Wen Quah (25.94) were the top two qualifiers in the event.

Although finishing last in the 200m IM, Beza's time of 2:11.06 ensured him of an Olympic slot.

South Korea's Jung Won-yong ruled the event in 2:04.69 while compatriot Gil Byeong-hui (2:04.79) and Thai Wongsuwan Ruthe (2:07.28) landed for the silver and bronze, respectively.

Ian Bobb Aldough's Hannah Dato clocked in seventh in 2:08.81 in the girls' 200 IM, almost 15 seconds behind Korean gold medalist Kim Seoyeong.

Olivia Chris Kimlen grabbed the silver in 2:16.29 and Taipei's Shieh Chih-Lin took the bronze (2:22.16).

In table tennis, Ian Garbin, Efrosh Tomas and Stephen Jacobs teamed up to dropping their opening matches.

Jose Collins finished fourth overall in the first block of the boys' Modified Biathlon event with 1,798 points. Consisting of eight frames, per block, Collins will attempt to secure a medal after the second block today.

Cycling tryouts open to all —Romero

By Cedrik F. Tapos

NATIONAL CYCLING PRESIDENT MIKEE Romero reminder urged stakeholders of the sport to set aside their differences and allow their riders to join the tryouts for the coming Laos Southeast Asian Games.

Romero, who assumed the Philippine cycling throne last last month, is hoping that the country's best riders, including the brouhahed Villa, for Bataan, will join the tryouts that will be held in three consecutive Sundays starting on July 12 in Rizal.

Also invited to join the tryouts are riders belonging to the group of Tagaytay Mayor Bunsoy Vaquilar.

"Everybody is welcome," Romero said in a statement.

"Let us show our love to our country by taking part in this tryouts. There is not room side now, don't allow politics to stain our lofty vision to the region."

However, who has committed P5 million for the runner's campaign in the SEA Games, vowed impartiality in the selection of the members of the team, pending out that the federation will not come out with a working rules to the tryouts.

"Our objective here is to select the best available riders for the SEA Games and keep that winning tradition in the regional tournament," said Romero, owner of the Hacbuan Cinder franchise that won seven straight championships in the Philippine Basketball League.

Four events will be contested in the SEA Games—the 40-km individual time trial, criterium race and team time trial for men's and women's road downhill.

The 170-km road race is slated on July 11, while the two individual time trials to be held in Bourbon in tentpole and the Quezon Memorial Circle is scheduled July 10.

The mountain bike event is set in Timberland, San Mateo, Rizal where six eight riders for the men's division will join the cross country event and four in six riders in the women's side.

Riders who make the RP Team will get a monthly allowance of P12,000 to P15,000 from the association for their build-up for the SEA Games.

Apart from the allowances, Romero has also dangled an incentive package that includes P500,000 for the gold medalist and P150,000 and P50,000 for the silver and bronze winners, respectively.

Interested riders may register at PhilCycling office, Room 207, Ynares Building, 331 Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City.

SPORTSWATCH

Davis Cuppers in PSA Forum

SPECIALS OF THE RP DAVIS CUP TEAM are the winners of the Pinoy Open bid to represent the country at the PSA Forum at Orpheus Island Resort.

Randy Villanueva, the RP Davis Cup team administrator, said everything here captain Chris Clarke will discuss the Filipinos' chances against Thailand in the Asia/Oceania Group 2 tie-break will start Friday.

With them in the competition are two-time 2009 Sports Finder of Event sponsored by Softball Rolling Pepsi Scott and Rodney's is "Mr" homosexuality Dhamka Mendoza.

PCAP Grand C'ship today

THE PINOY COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF the Philippines 2009 Cockers of the Year will be known today as the PCAP Grand Championship 3-cock derby with 0.4 p.m. at the Makati Coliseum.

Paulo Olgo, with his witty Fighter, leads the field with 24 points, followed by Elmo Carlos Placido Gold (20.5), Arman Santos Lloyd Perez (21.5), Mike and Tonio Bernie Cuevas and Ruel Lopez (21) and Lord Dhan Concepcion Bruder (21.5).

Four-cock derby at SJC

THE GROUND-BREAKING B.S.L. ACCELAND Multi-Ply 4-Cock Derby circles at San Juan Coliseum will resume on Wednesday.

Manager Joel Pauly Lanuevo said that the event will see derby-type guaranteed prize of P400,000 for six entry fee of P11,000. All entries must be submitted tomorrow.

On Thursday, the "2008 Ambot Mot Sun-Cock Classic" offers P200,000 for an entry fee of P1,500.

Each night winner gets a P1,000 bonus.

Martes shakes off cobwebs, tops Milo Marathon MM leg

By Ronino S. Aurelio

CHRISTABEL MARTES BELIEVED she sneaked away with another marathon title a tide-years hour with a left thigh injury.

But the 29-year-old pride of Baguio City found any unlikely enemy in a boiling sun-lit and coupled with rules the top workers, she showed she's on her way to full recovery by topping the 22nd Milo Marathon Elite Meet's leg at the Quezon Greenhouse yesterday.

Martes, the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games gold medalist has now formed to quit the race in Thailand five years later due to injury, timed 2 hours, 48 minutes, 58 seconds in the race that drew 10,712 participants.

She said she will use her P50,000 winnings to undergo a surgeries recommence keeping (MRI) for further check-up on her old injury.

Making second was 2005-2006 national winner Ru-An Benaoraj with a time of 2:53:52 with Adner Tolentino third in 2:55:46.

Rene Dionaro pulled away in the 6-car lead minutes to take the men's title in 2:19:39 for his third leg win overall.

Last year's Metro Manila regionals, or and 2000-2001 national champion Allan Balleste placed second in 2:44:14 with third-placer Alley Quinay clocking 2:57:21.

All top three finishers met the Oct. 4 national finals qualifying mark of 4:30 for women and 4:00 for men.

Martes and Benaoraj likewise passed the finish requirement of under three hours. Next among the men, however, was the 2:26 mark.

Martes credited Dagohoy Bobo Isaac, a Cebuano boxing coach handling the national team in Baguio, for inviting her belief that she too win again.

"I met him in September last year and he offered to help me train," said the 1999-2001 Milo national champion in Filipino.

Martes' last full marathon win was in the 2000 Hong Kong Standard Chartered race.

Dionaro, still eyeing a first race RP team win, won his first full marathon event. He has previous leg wins in Rotary City event both 2:26 races.

The 2:26 winners were John Lunaka and Jessie Lumales. Topping the 10K were University of Santo Tomas' Felipe Rodel and Maureen Dichoso.

The 5K race, which have 14,564 entries, was dominated by Marvin Garate and Hilen Barrera.

HYGA chair Bayani Fernando fires the starting gun for the 1.5K runners yesterday in the "Run 4 Health" elimination race of the 22nd National Milo Marathon at Rizal Park in Manila. Looking on is Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, who flagged off the Kiddies' 2K race. Almost 14,700 runners joined the marathon's LYCR elimination.

Editor Tedjoe V. Holmedoro ● Associate Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Serena dwarfs big sister

Younger Williams bags third Wimbledon crown

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—SERENA WILLIAMS SEPT TELEPO. RIVERLP she was facing just another foe in the Wimbledon final, just another woman who felt the ball quite hard, just another player trying to deny her a Grand Slam title.

She wasn't facing just anyone, of course. She was playing her older sister Venus. And when the latest all-Williams final finished, when Serena stopped top at 7-6 (3), 6-2 victory last sunday For a third Wimbledon championship and 11th major title overall, she topped it the sort with her arm as extended for a handshake.

Venus pulled her close for a warm embrace, instead.

"I didn't think about Venus at all today. I just saw her as an opponent," said Serena, who also beat her sister in the 2002 and 2003 finals at the All England Club. "It's not point, after the first set, I looked on the side of the court at the stats, and it was like 'Williams,' Williams.' I couldn't figure out which was which."

That was because she was facing the same woman who once roped her powers and court coverage on grass courts. Monday's rankings will say Serena is No. 2, and Venus No. 3—behind No. 1 Dinara Safina, a 6-1, 6-0 loser to the elder Williams in the round before—but it is clear who the best woman in the world is or the one-worst.

Serena has won three of the past four Grand Slam titles and even posted a little bit at Indian, who is 9-1 in major finals.

"If you hold three Grand Slams at this, maybe you should be No. 1, but not on the WTA Tour," Venus said. Then, alluding concisely to her less-than-major years over by Selena, Venus said, "I've stayed in No. 2. That's where I sat. Illness did a great jobers get to No. 1. She won Roma and Madrid," Ivan laughed.

Serena leads Venus in Grand Slam titles (11-7), is head-to-head matches (11-10), and is all-Williams major finals (4-2).

It was the 14th Grand Slam final for each Williams; no other active women participated in more than two. Serena is 11-3 in such matches; Venus fell to 7-7, with all but one defeat coming against her sister.

Asked if it's easier or harder losing to a sibling, five-time Wimbledon champion Venus said: "There's no 'easy' in losing, especially when it's so close to the crown."

She was the two-time defending champion and had won 20 matches in a row at Wimbledon, the last 17 in straight sets. But Venus—at 29, she's 15 months older than Serena—appeared a step slow, perhaps bothered by the left knee that's been bandaged since the second round, although she refused to place blame there.

"She played so well, really lifted her game," Venus said. "Used an extra here and there. Today, I couldn't make errors."

Serena, who turns 28 next month, smiled, Venus and Venus returned to Centre Court and capped their domination of the tournament by winning a second consecutive Wimbledon doubles championship. Dropping points between points, the eldest beat Australians Samantha Stosur and Rennae Stubbs, 7-6 (4), 6-3, to collect their ninth women's doubles crown. Grand Slam title, fourth at Wimbledon.

"Nothing like winning a title with your sister," Serena said.

That's right. A quick, unwarranted foray from opponent to bystander. But they're used to it. It's the last time.

SERENA Williams celebrates after converting championship point against older sister Venus. AFP

Woods, Kim make AT&T final pairing

BETHESDA, MARYLAND—TOTOMORROW! Tiger Woods survived a roller-coaster round with an even-par 71 Saturday to share the 54-hole lead with defending champion Anthony Kim at the AT&T National.

Kim turned birdie into bogey with an ugly three-putt on No. 9 but kept his cool in route. Sunday's conditions for a 2-under 68.

The 24-year-old has never finished higher than 50th in a PGA Tour event, and this will be the first time they have been paired together in any round of any tournament.

"I'm excited to be there," Kim said. "There's not too many chances to play against the best in the world at his tournament. I've said it on to play great tomorrow."

And what does he expect from Tiger?

"I expect he's going to be wearing a red shirt and he out there ready to go," Kim said.

Woods has a 44-3 record on the PGA Tour when he has at least a share of the 54-hole lead, although it took work to get there. He started with a one-shot lead over Rod Pampling, a advantage that was gone after one hole when Woods drove into the gallery and couldn't reach the green out of the thick rough.

He recovered with a 25-foot eagle on the par-5 ninth for a three-shot lead, but going down, headed to bunker near the green and missing a 7-foot putt gave him a double bogey at No. 11.—Woods has played four holes in 4 over this week—and a tie for the lead.

Woods had to get up-and-down for birdie on the 18th for a share of the lead, and he made routine par for his 70.

They were at 12-under 200, but this was his first a two-man race.

Michael Allen, who is 0-for-208 in his PGA Tour career but undefeated on the Champions Tour when he won the Senior PGA Championship earlier this year, made seven birdies in a round of 65, the best score Saturday. AP

Question: When was the three point shot first introduce in the PBA?

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TOUR DE FRANCE

Cancellara tops 1st stage; Armstrong solid

MONACO—LANCE ARMSTRONG PUT IN a solid performance in his comeback at the Tour de France on Saturday, finishing the first stage ahead of 170 rivals except overall and a respectable 10th behind winner Fabian Cancellara.

Armstrong's Astana team was dominant in the time-trial through the hills and hairpin turns of Monaco, led by the cyclist who last been billed as the American's foe in Tour titles—Alberto Contador of Spain.

Armstrong, who has a record seven Tour victories, is returning to cycling's showcase race after ending a 3½-year retirement this winter. At 37, he is one of the oldest riders in the pack and had a chance to test his legs and state of mind.

"I was nervous, I was excited, and trying to focus on doing the right race, specifically in terms of starting easy and finishing good," he said. "When I finished, I was like oh—yeah, it was a hard race."

Cancellara took the yellow jersey by finishing the 15.5-kilometer (9.6-mile) time trial in 19 minutes, 32 seconds—18 seconds ahead of Contador, the 2007 Tour winner. They're still coached by their parents, who began working them the game as small children. They still share a house during Wimbledon. They still practice together. AP

CANCELLARA

ARMSTRONG

CONTADOR

"I didn't expect to win or to take the jersey. I didn't expect a super, super performance," Armstrong said.

The rest against the clock, in which riders set off one by one down the road ramp, offered an early shakeout of the potential contenders to take the three-week cycling showcase.

Contador showed he was ready.

"Fabian is a great champion. I feel my form is very good," the 26-year-old Spaniard said. "I think I'll try to keep up this level. I think I have started well."

Contador was forced to sit out last year because of Astana's previous doping problems. He is a former climber than Cancellara, and the Pyrenees mountains loom in Stage 7. AP

Former NFL star quarterback shot dead

MCNAIR

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—FORmer NFL quarterback Steve McNair, who led his team to the 2000 Super Bowl, was found dead with multiple gunshot wounds in the head Saturday.

Police said a 20-year-old woman, Sahel Kazemi, who was described as a "friend" of McNair was also dead. She had a single gunshot to the head and a gun was found near her body in the downtown condominium.

Police said the 36-year-old McNair was found on the sofa in the living room, and Kazemi was very close to him on the floor.

Police spokesperson Don Aaron said McNair's wife, Michelle, is "very distraught."

"At this juncture, we do not believe she is involved," he said. "Nothing has been ruled out, but as we're actively looking for a suspect tonight, the current would be an."

McNair played 13 seasons and was best known for his stint with the Tennessee Titans before retiring in April 2008.

The bodies were discovered Saturday afternoon by McNair's longtime friend Wayne Bentley, who said he went the condo in the expensive Belle Meade neighborhood, with McNair.

McNair, a four-time Pro Bowler, led the Titans within a yard of having overtime in the 2000 Super Bowl, which they lost 23-16 to the St. Louis Rams. He also played for the Baltimore Ravens and was co-MVP of the 1997 La 2003.

Police said a witness saw McNair arrive at the condo between 1:30 and 2 a.m. Saturday and that Kazemi's vehicle was already there. AP

Sa panahon ng kagipitan, ikaw ay aking katuwangan...

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BUSINESS

Clampdown on telecom firms continues

IN THIS ISSUE

- **GMA 7 on track to hit** P2.8-B profit target /B3
- **Stock analysts** forecast bear market nearing end /B4
- **Banks remain bullish,** see economy growing this year /B5
- **Spreads on RP bonds** narrowed in Q1, BSP says /B7

Removal of load expiry, new billing scheme loom

By Dianne L. Lucas and Doris C. Dumlao

AMID THE CONTINUING CLAMOR FROM THE PUBLIC FOR greater regulation of mobile phone services, the National Telecommunications Commission is set to mandate a sharp reduction in the billing unit of voice calls "to protect and promote the interests of subscribers and end-users."

The proposed memorandum circular ordering wireless operators to charge clients' voice calls by every three seconds of usage, instead of the present practice of billing on a per-minute basis.

For this kind of service, the NTC memorandum said that "the authorized rates shall be reduced correspondingly."

Each billing unit is called a "pulse."

"The rate for the first three pulses (i.e., the first nine seconds of a call) shall be higher than the succeeding pulses to recover the cost of the call setup," the draft circular read.

By reducing the duration of the billing units, the telecommunications regulator hopes to address the distaste for cheaper call rates from the consuming public. The pro-

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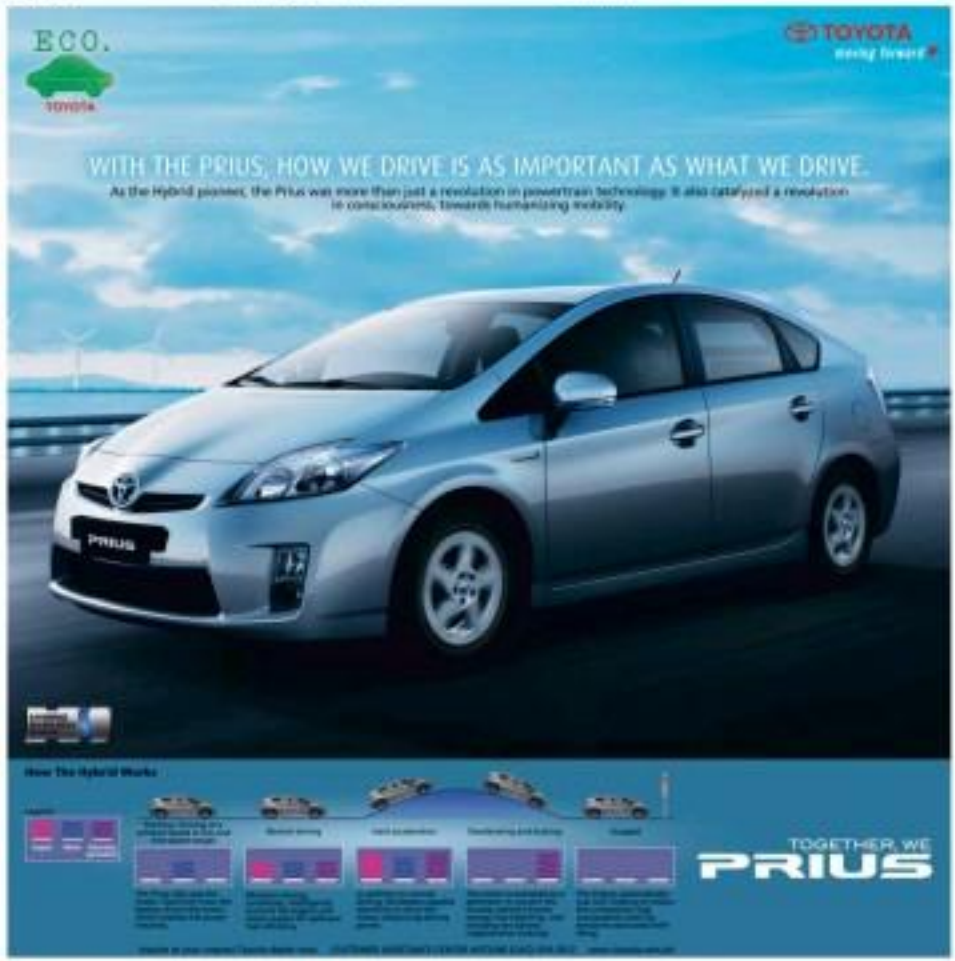

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by another 1.3% percent week-on-week to close at 2850.34 on Friday.

"Investors are starting to doubt the sustainability of the market's recent rally and opted to cash in their gains," said Banco de Oro Unibank strategist Jonathan Ravelas, noting that the market may see 2,800-2,850 this week.

Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings said the market would likely consolidate this week but some brave souls could pick up select stocks with potentially good earnings.

"Mga supposed earnings to be released later, "maybe you could see some bargain-hunting processing of issues," he said. (Doris C. Dumlao)

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MOVIE FRAME IT SAID THAT THE Philippines is a rich country pretending to be poor.

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But alas, we have become a classic illustration of the so-called "natural resource curse" written about by various authors, including economist Jeffrey Sachs of "The End of Poverty" fame. Sometimes also called the "paradox of plenty" this is the commonly observed phenomenon whereby countries rich in natural resources end up being much poorer than those that are far less endowed.

Backing in biodiversity

According to Conservation International, the country possesses more than 50,000 documented plant and animal species, more than 65 percent of which are found nowhere else on earth. Furthermore, more new species are discovered in the country every year than in any other country in the world. Animal life in the country is extremely diverse, with more than 1,000 species of reptile, vertebrates identified, 48 percent of which are endemic to (i.e., originally found in) the country.

The Philippine archipelago lies in the "Coral Triangle," the center of the most diverse habitat in the marine tropics. Philippine coral reefs comprise more than one-fourth of the total reef area in Southeast Asia and are recognized to be among the richest and most diverse in the world, with more than 400 species of hard corals and more than 50 species of soft corals identified. All these have given the Philippines the distinction of being named one of the 10 "mega-diversity" countries of the world, which collectively account for 60-70 percent of global biodiversity.

Threats

On the other hand, we have also been tagged, internationally as a biodiversity "hotspot"—that is, a country where biodiversity is under extreme threat from destruction, conversion, fragmentation of natural habitats, overexploited trade and low overall environmental quality. Nearly 200 of our vertebrate species are currently threatened by extinction, the best-known being the Philippine eagle. Plus, along with other endemic species such as the Cebu flowerpecker, the golden-crowned flying fox, the Philippine cockatoo and the Sigaya forest frog are now barely surviving in the remaining small patches of forest that serve as their natural habitat.

In the sea, nearly a third of our coral reefs are considered to be in poor condition. Moreover, there has been a steady decline in the quality of the coral reefs, with only a tiny 0.24 percent reported to be in excellent condition in 2004, against 5.3 percent in 2000 and 5.3 percent in 1997. Of these reefs, 59 percent are considered under medium or high threat.

Greatest enemy

Forest destruction, including

No Free Lunch
Cynthia P. Hawkins

illegal conversion of uplands to monoculture (single-crop) farming, has been the single biggest enemy of biodiversity in the Philippines. Burning of uplands—especially of beds of reeds, tropic or moss is a major threat to the country's animal biodiversity. Still another source of damage is the reckless introduction of invasive alien plant or animal species to the islands, among the most harmful being the giant ox fish, black bass, golden snail, various toads including the marine toad and the American bullfrog. Invasive aquatic plants like the water hyacinth and water fern have also significantly affected wetland biodiversity already. The past 10 years have seen an enormous rise in risks associated with such biotic invasions.

In the seas, the country's rich endowment of some of the world's most unique marine ecosystems has been increasingly threatened by overfishing, pollution and other human economic activities on the coasts. Strong population pressure in coastal communities has exerted the country's coastal fishery resources to their limits. Effects by dedicated groups such as WWF-Philippines (Kelong Kalilayan ng Pilipinas) are very helpful, but the tiny Davids facing the Goliath-like enemy led by collective myopia and indifference, bad governance and rampant corruption.

Anna Chris left us with the parable of the three servants who were entrusted by their masters with portions of his wealth. The first two had doubled their portions upon the master's return, but the third, who merely buried the wealth and kept it intact, incurred the master's ire. We are worse than that third servant. We have even recklessly squandered away the abundant wealth God has entrusted to Filipino stock.

Is it any wonder that we are now suffering the natural resources curse?

Comments welcome at chuckhin@pldtdsl.net

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MARKETING FIELDERS, INC.

MPIC eyes $300M from stock offer

By Doris C. Dumlao

MERIDIO PACIFIC IN... ventures Corp. has tapped the CLSA group to arrange a $200... to $300-million capital-raising activity to fund co-... and transfers to shareholder base.

MPIC chair... Manuel V. Pangilinan... said MPIC would like to raise as much as $300 million from the sale of new common shares but the actual amount would depend on... market conditions.

CLSA has acted as financial adviser to the tender offer made by leading wireless provider Smart Communications Inc. to minority shareholders of affiliate Philippine Telephone Corp., which are all part of the PLDT group.

MPIC has set a special stockholders' meeting on Aug. 21 to ratify the issuance of new common shares and the listing of the shares.

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
PICPA Building, 700 Shaw Boulevard
Mandaluyong City

NOTICE OF MEETING
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

To ALL PICPA Members:

In accordance with the provisions of Article XIII, Section 1 and 2 of the By-Laws of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, notice is hereby given that the Annual Membership Meeting will be on Friday, July 24, 2009 at 1:00 pm at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinental Makati City.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Publication of Notice of Meeting
3. Certification as to Presence of Quorum
4. Reading and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Report of the President
7. Report of the Treasurer
8. New Business
9. Determination of the place of the next annual meeting
10. Adjournment

We urge all members to attend the Annual Membership Meeting. For members who cannot be present in person, please accomplish and return to us the general proxy form. The general proxy form can be downloaded from the PICPA website www.picpa.com.ph or can be obtained from the PICPA National and Chapter Offices.

[signature]
Maricel Bacolod
National Secretary

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GMA 7 on track to hit P2.8-B profit target

By Dave C. Dantes

GMA NETWORK HAS BEEN STRONG AHEAD OF revenues in June, putting the broadcasting giant on track with its P2.8 billion net profit target for the full year, top officials said.

"I think, by end of June, we will meet half of what we target," GMA chief finance officer Felipe Yalong said.

GMA president Felipe Gozon added: June [2009] is better than June of last year, so the first whole of the six months, it will be the first."

The company posted P1.89 billion in net profit for the first five months of the year on the back of record high revenues. The network [illegible] percent higher than the P900 million posted in the same period last year. The company earlier reported.

Historically, Yalong said the second half usually turned out to be better than the first.

Despite the slower economic growth this year, most media companies are benefiting from a surge in the so-called "advocacy" placements of politicians ahead of the 2010 national elections.

Overseas operations are likewise contributing more to GMA's net profit this year and are expected to account for at least a fifth of the bottom line this year.

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STYLE AHEAD OF TIME

Stock analysts forecast bear market nearing end

ROUNDUP

Seaoil's 97-octane gas

INDEPENDENT OIL PLAYER SEAOIL PHILIPPINES Corp. is upgrading its 95-octane gasoline products to a higher 97-octane within the year, setting a new standard for the local petroleum industry.

In a briefing, Seaoil president Francis Gimenez said the Extreme 97 fuel of 97+ octane rating, allowing the engines to operate at maximum power.

Other oil companies offer gasoline with 91, 95, and 98 octane levels.

The octane number is used to measure a fuel's ability to resist knocking, which is when trapped fuel-air pocket in an engine ignite before the flame from the spark plug can reach it. A higher octane means more efficient burning of fuel and higher engine performance. *Joey A. Sarmiento*

Pacific Online's new business

PACIFIC ONLINE SYSTEMS CORP., THE LISTED gaming arm of Belle Corp., has formed a new corporate unit to instant scratch lottery, which has the potential to grow into a P5-billion business per year.

In the first few months of the year, Pacific Online sold 35 million tickets at "Instantik," translating to P480 million or about a quarter of the gaming firm's sales during the period, company chair Willy Ocier said. *Doreen C. Estrellan*

Toledo copper shipments

ATLAS CONSOLIDATED MINING AND DEVELOPMENT Corp. shipped 4,900 dry metric tons (dmt) of copper concentrate from its Toledo copper mines last week, the mine said.

Company exclusive-discount this concentrate shipped contained 28.01 percent copper, 2.08 grams per dmt of gold and 24.87 grams per dmt of silver.

Atlas said its board had given Atlasun Resources Corp. until June 30, 2010 to exercise its option to subscribe to 50 million of its common shares. *Elisa T. Olchondra*

CitisecOnline's top picks are banks, property firms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BEAR MARKET IS SEASONED to end but stock prices have now become expensive since they will inevitably go down. Save before a solid base can be built for a recovery half-year, weak reports from brokerage CitisecOnline said.

Such a correction should be an opportunity to load for long-term, CitisecOnline head of research April Lee-Tan said in a report. Investors can also look outside the economy for more stuff.

She said the best time to accumulate stocks in the Philippine Stock Exchange would be when the main index falls to at least 2,350. The main index closed at 2,431.24 on Friday.

"It's no longer cheap. And although we're seeing some green shoots of recovery globally, there's still an abundance of negative news, like the [Philippine government] budget deficit, stimulus continues to balloon and the downgrades to GDP (gross domestic product) growth forecast. There could be [more] vulnerabilities," Lee-Tan said.

But once the index hits 2,350 or lower, that would be a good time to take position in preparation for a full market, she said.

"Banks and the property sector are expected to benefit the most," she added.

The analyst said the local banking system was resilient to the challenging environment as it had improved asset quality and kept loan default ratios within manageable levels, beefed up loan provisions and maintained higher-than-required capital adequacy ratio in the quarter.

Her top picks in the sector are Bank of the Philippine Islands, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and Security Bank.

CitisecOnline's top picks at the property counter are Ayala Land Inc. and Robinsons Land Corp.

But Lee-Tan said there were three risks to this favorable outlook—if warnings countercurrent fall too sharply or grow at people's spending power, if inflation spikes up anew as this may reverse the current bank's accessory easy money and if widening of the budget deficit.

CitisecOnline chief technical analyst Jonn Razonda said although stocks had climbed sharply in the last four months, there might be another rare opportunity to buy them at bargain prices as there is an anomaly here.

"It seems the market is coming to subside to show you that window of opportunity," he said. "There are telltale signs that it's difficult to push up market prices from here."

But he said the board was over by the end of the year and there would no longer likely enough the lows seen in the last two years. He said the market would find a good support level at 2,209 to 2,185, representing a 38.2% percent pullback from the rally seen from March to June this year.

PLDT projects growth in H1 core earnings

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEphone Co. (PLDT) sees better first-semester core earnings compared to year-ago level despite a slowing domestic economy.

PLDT and Smart Communications president Napoleon Nazareno said the wireless business would likely post a better performance in the second quarter compared to a year ago.

"I'm not sure if it's better than the first quarter, but the trending is better than last year. And trending is ahead the same magnitude as how the first quarter was better than the first quarter of last year," Nazareno said.

In the first quarter, PLDT's wireless service revenue rose by 6 percent to P22.9 billion from a year ago, fueled by the growth in its mobile and wireless broadband subscriber base. Revenue from short messaging service (SMS) or prepaid in cellular mobile line and home-broadband internet services.

Nazareno said the good second-quarter results in the wireless business would translate to better core earnings for PLDT in the first half compared to a year ago.

He does not foresee in the first quarter rose by 9 percent to P10.2 billion year-on-year but due to foreign exchange losses, PLDT reported an 8-percent drop in first-quarter consolidated net income to P6.6 billion over a year ago. *Doris C. Dumlao*

PNOC-EC may tap excess Malampaya capacity

By Amy Remo

PNOC EXPLORATION CORP. HAS expressed interest in the 300-megawatt (MW) excess capacity of Shell Batangas Exploration BV's 3,000-MW Malampaya deep water gas-to-power project.

PNOC-EC chair Jesbert Perez said the 300-MW excess capacity would serve as the anchor load for the proposed 1,000-kilometer Batangas-Manila Shell-Mindoro pipeline.

Soon completed in four years, the pipeline will deliver the natural gas from Tabangao, Batangas to the decommissioned 700-MW Sucat and Ilijan fuel-fired power plants.

The Sucat plant would then have to be converted into a combined-cycle facility.

"Before we even start [construction for Pedilion I], we should be assured that there is a supply of natural gas. Otherwise, we will end up importing coal, which would defeat the purpose of the project," Perez said.

The Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project is off-shore Palawan provides fuel to the 1,200-MW Ilijan, 1,000-MW San Gabriel and 500-MW San Lorenzo plants in Batangas.

Perez said the Malampaya field could produce gas enough to fuel 3,000 MW worth of power capacity, the excess 300 MW could be used to fuel the Sucat plant.

However, Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes earlier said the government was still studying whether to allocate the excess 300 MW to power generation or the transport sector.

The excess capacity was initially intended for the San Pascual co-generation project of a consortium led by Edison Mission Energy.

DISCLOSURES

ISMED RESOURCES, Inc. has postponed its annual stockholders' meeting previously set for the third quarter of 2009. The details have not been announced.

* * *

Cosmos Resources (Philippines) Inc. has postponed its annual stockholders' meeting previously set for the third quarter of 2009. The details have not been announced.

* * *

ORIX Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 29 at 9 a.m. at the Manila Golf & Country Club in Makati City. Stockholders of record as of June 17 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

* * *

TEC Steel Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 31 at 9 a.m. at the Discovery Suites in Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of June 30 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting. *Compiled by Lawrence de Guzman and Alice Wilson*

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Banks remain bullish, see economy growing this year

By Michelle V Rosca

Increased lending, pump-priming to fuel expansion

THE BANKING SECTOR IS CONfident that the economy will not plummet into a recession this year, with most industry players strong-confident that increasing lending, although at a moderate pace, remained a positive business signal.

But the influential Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP), the source the economy would go through is a slack slowdown to growth.

"We don't think there will be a recession. The growth may be slightly even more, but not negative," BAP president Aurelio Montinola III said at the sidelines of the 80th anniversary celebration of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas held Friday at the BSP headquarters in Manila.

The economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, registered a surprisingly anemic growth of 0.4 percent in the first quarter. This prompted some analysts to predict that a recession was in the offing.

However, the administration's economic officials said the Philippines would not come into a recession, citing favorable indicators like the continuously rising remittances, investments in the business process outsourcing industry and the stimulus programs of the government.

Continued fiscal prudence exists from the government, the BAP said banks would continue to have an appetite for lending both to consumers and to businesses.

Montinola, who is also president of Bank of the Philippine Islands, said the banking sector was expected to register a 15-percent growth in loans to individual borrowers this year. On the other hand, loans to businesses would rise by low-digit.

"But overall, growth in lending will still be positive," he said.

Last week, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported that bank lending growth continued to decelerate in May. Total loan portfolio of commercial banks stood at P2.23 trillion as of end-May, growing 10.3 percent year on year.

Although the expansion of bank loans was still in the double-digit territory, this marked a half-year slowdown from 15.6 percent in April and 18.9 percent in March. Last year, growth in bank lending was sustained above 20 percent.

The declining pace of loan growth was attributed both to supply and demand. Citing consumer if conducted recently the BSP said loan officers of banks somehow tightened credit standards to avoid higher non-performing loans (NPL). Banks believed that the crisis might make it easier difficult for some borrowers to service debts, prompting them to impose stricter lending requirements, the central bank said.

The slower growth in loans was also due to demand-related factors. The BSP said some businesses might have experienced a decline in orders, and so it was logical for them to reduce demand for credit.

INFOTECH

THE NEW Samsung ultra-slim ST50

Point-and-shooter gets easier on the eyes

By Raquel F. Gomez

LIKE DIGITAL SLRs, NEW point-and-shoot cameras keep getting better, not only in megapixel standard but also in physical looks and overall features.

Samsung's new digital point-and-shoot camera the ST50 is an ultra-thin digicam that already boasts of 12.2 megapixel resolution, but capable of 3x optical zoom, and a host of easy-to-use features that make it a very practical camera to bring to any trip.

By looks alone, the Samsung ST50 is a slim standout at only .65 inches thick. Featuring a large 2.7 bright LCD screen, it is housed in a smooth brushed stainless steel body while display-savvy edges, coming in black, red, silver and blue, the ST50 is a pretty camera that you can show off.

As co-specifically, the door/ption "easy to use" is an understatement when describing the ST50. It has the Smart Auto feature, which is activated for newbies need to go through the menu folder for pre-set modes or select recommended settings.

The Smart Auto is the "intelligent toolkit" that automatically analyzes shooting situations and selects from one of eleven optimized settings to produce the best possible shot.

For example, when shooting a shot of trees, one or a bush, the ST50 uses Smart Feature mode compensates by providing lower f/ film speeds (ISO 100), shutter speeds of 1/90 sec. to 1/125 sec., and higher F or aperture numbers.

When shooting a scene in low-light conditions, for instance our afternoon indoors, the ST50 uses Auto Feature mode provides higher film speed of 800, lower F numbers, and slower shutter speed (1/15 sec. to 1/30 sec.).

But if the user wants to customize his shots a little, he can always opt to disregard the Smart Feature, de-activating it by pressing the button on the right top side of the camera, and go to the menu options for a choice of pre-set modes.

The user can choose from a range of pre-set features like Face Detection, Smile Shot, Blink Detection, and Beauty Shot.

Face Detection feature automatically recognizes up to nine faces in a frame and adjusts camera setting to enhance image quality. Smile Shot feature makes the camera capture an image only when the subject shows a smile.

With Blink Detection feature, the ST50 takes three consecutive shots of a subject automatically in order to ensure that on the final shot, the subject isn't blinking anymore.

An interesting feature is the Beauty Shot, which automatically "re-touches" images features like blemishes and dark spots on a subject's face to improve skin tones.

For more scene modes and customized settings, the user can click on "photo style selector" and choose from soft, vivid, forest, retro, cool, calm, black and white, negative, and custom RGB settings.

The ST50 also functions as a video camera, capable of shooting videos in 20 frames per second (fps) at maximum VGA resolution of 640 x 480.

Through pedestrian and on scene to scene, with battery life that can last up to three days, the ST50 has one major drawback. The camera exterior is smooth and shiny, making the device prone to slipping from user's grip. The same stands to take extra care when using the camera on a beach or any watery location.

The ST50 currently retails at a not-so-steep price of P13,988.

New device captures life's spontaneous moments

BE ONE CLICK AWAY FROM recording life's special moments—all it takes is a shiny eye and a click on the dedicated video camera key.

Several videos in an instant on the new Sony Ericsson K852. Even by spotting a celebrity on the street, in your friend's dancing in a club, the K852 allows you to capture these moments in two quick and easy steps.

The two-megapixel camera can be used both vertically and, with the help of the Gravity-control imaging detectors in the keypad, you can change the settings and get the shot you want quicker. You can also use the integrated Photo fix function to get the best picture quality in one step.

"Capture life's spontaneous moments the easy way with the K852 and its many video recording," said Hiro Sug, Sony Ericsson vice president, Asia Pacific. "The K852 also allows you to get organized and keep track of your hectic lifestyle by ensuring that you never miss another birthday or appointment again...never will your important dates, add reminders—three clicks and relax."

Sharing pictures with friends is easier than ever before. Showcase them on the K852's touch screen or forward them to another mobile phone via Bluetooth™.

Whatever the occasion, you may post photos straight from the phone with just a few clicks—and don't forget to send the web address to others to check out your camera skills.

Its two-megapixel camera can be used horizontally to take picture perfect stills.

The Bluetooth imaging also lets you take great shots with your Photo fix lets you enhance the picture quality and share with family and friends. Picture blogging is offered for uploading your images to the web with just a few clicks. Then get organized with its calendar, alarm and 1,000 contact phone book.

Try the new Sony Ericsson Cyber-shot Walkman® handset, the W880i—the perfect accessory with the K852. The W880i is an easy to use handset with rich sound. The stylish hands-free features one-touch call handling, handy volume control and in-shot discreet reversible clip-on that can match any outfit.

SONY Ericsson K852

NEW APPLE ON THE MARKET

Globe will launch iPhone 3GS—the latest—most powerful iPhone yet, in the Philippines on July 11. Reservations will be accepted starting July 10. Customers can reserve by calling Globe hotline at 730 1000, through www.iphone3g.globe.com, or by going to any Globe Business Center.

Slim is truly in

ASPIRE One Slim

WITH THE ENTRY OF NETbooks, the world has seen the evolution of the computer into a truly revolutionary device, without people to their daily tasks, whether at home or at work.

Acer's excellent range of netbooks has become the world's ultimate take-with-you digital companion.

The emerging Aspire One Slim netbook comes equipped with a genuine Windows XP Home edition operating system, Intel Atom N280 (1.66GHz, 667FSB) or N270 (1.6GHz, 533FSB) L2 cache processor, a 1GB DDR2 memory and a 160GB/120GB hard drive.

The Aspire One Slim also has many connectivity features which perfect to work outdoors.

It has the new 802.11b/g/Draft-N network connection not to also Wi-fi certified but supports Acer SignUp easy-to-use technology.

It has built-in Bluetooth connectivity with an integrated Acer Crystal Eye webcam.

Also, with its 10.1 HD 1024 x 600 WSVGA pixel resolution, high-brightness Acer CrystalBrite LED-backlit TFT LCD, the Aspire One Slim is perfect for watching movies or reviewing corporate presentations.

It also has high definition audio support, with two built-in stereo speakers, optimized DolbyHeadphone technology and built-in digital microphone, ideal for room communication or even video talking with telephone.

With Aspire One Slim, typing is never a problem. Its keyboard is 95 percent of standard-size. It has a multi-partner touchpad pointing device with two function that support circular-two finger scrolling, pinch-zoom, and page flip. It also has a built-in multi-card reader, 3 USB ports, and battery that lasts up to 8 hours.

The Aspire One AOD250 Slim has light as-it-is-like dimensions, weighing in at only 1.27 kg. High gloss color options include Sapphire Blue, Emerald White, and Ruby Red.

LG's new baby: Arena

THE LG ARENA's touchscreen display has incredible WVGA resolution—four times greater than QVGA. With the iPhone's LED screen available as a mobile phone. Arena is ideal for watching 3D or 3rd movies on-the-go.

It's recording capability supports DVD-resolution video that looks great even when played back on large TV.

Arena comes with hundreds of music and movie files onto its 4B of storage, including 8 GB of internal memory and a micro SD slot. The powerful battery provides up to 300 hours of MP3 playtime and 300 hours of standby time.

All of these powerful features are packed in ARENA's sleek and refined metal body that measures 105.9 x 53.3 x 11.95 mm. Textured glass over the touch-sensor screen durability to keep the phone looking sophisticated and clean. Arena will be available in silver and black variations for P26,999.

LG ELECTRONICS (LGEMI) in the Philippine branch of LG Arena (LG-KM900), a fully loaded multimedia phone equipped with LG's intuitive new 3D S-Class UI to boot (see LE).

Arena, LG's new flagship model for 2009, is the first and currently the only multimedia phone to use Dolby Mobile from Dolby Laboratories Inc., capable of delivering an exhilarating surround sound experience for video content and enhance the sound of music content.

"When really makes Arena special is its intuitive 3D S-Class UI, which is unlike anything that has appeared on a phone before," said Raymond Hemmicki of LG Electronics Philippines. "We surveyed consumers and found that they were unhappy with current interfaces. They needed a simple, fast and fun way to access multimedia and other features. You also an impression that was dynamic and interesting. We've done this so well with our brand new S-Class UI that it will set new standards for handsets to both fun-friendly and fun."

Intuitive and life-like touch-based UI means that the fun-out of searching through contacts and multimedia content—perfect for anyone comfortable with a traditional touch-type experience.

Pool Swelling lays on screen as it flows seen as video and, providing room for each choice that is so easy to understand. Dragging a finger across the S-Class UI's 3D web allows users to scroll through entertainment options.

On camera mode, Arena has an intuitive on-screen dial, used by to those brand on many high-end standalone cameras, making easy to customize shot settings for picture-perfect results.

Also, Arena's Gentle Life makes it easier for users to browse through contacts and other contacted information. When searched, for items search like a rubber band to provide more detailed information, options or editing.

Colorful graphics give Arena a sense of dynamism and fun found in no other phone. Arena's dynamic graphics are especially evident in the phone's Floating Image Gallery. When held upright, the phone displays pictures in neat rows. But turn the phone on its side and the photos cascade off the screen and reappear much larger.

With Turtle landscape Alarm Clock and Radio Tuner, users may feel as if they're actually moving a clock's hands or running to actual dial.

LG Arena's large 3.0-inch full touchscreen display has incredible WVGA resolution—four times greater than QVGA. With the iPhone's LED screen available as a mobile phone. Arena is ideal for watching 3D or 3rd movies on-the-go.

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VH-C50 bomb-shaped accessory for the K852

Cheap chip makes all the difference

MAJOR GLOBAL CHIPMAKER and graphics card producer Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) is bent on creating a new notebook category much improved from that of the netbook, which is considered the most successful product initiated by Intel.

Currently, different brands of notebooks are powered by Intel's Atom processor, which is low-thermal but with very limited capability.

Now AMD plans to influence consumer preference for notebooks with the introduction of new technology that will power low-priced ultra-thin notebooks that can do a lot more than net books.

According to Tan Ser Ghee, AMD technology director for Southeast Asia, the new ultra portables will only range from $400 to $700, but this can already run Direct 10X games or videos or other graphics intensive applications.

Ghee says the new ultra thin notebooks will try to address the limitations of the netbooks, particularly on running productivity applications, videos and music editing software, and even multimedium and performance gaming.

"Those ultra ultra portables can do a lot more than e-mail. They are capable of high definition graphics and videos such as Blu Ray video, but priced within an affordable range," says Ghee.

Prices of full featured small and thin ultra portable notebooks running on Intel's ultra low voltage processors (ULVs) are all descending through the steel-side lines.

HP's recently launched DV3, a 12-inch display ultra-thin notebook, runs on AMD dubbed Yukon CE Dual-Core processor.

The one-inch thick notebook is also equipped with ATI Mobility Radeon HD Premium Graphics 3410 (512 MB dedicated video memory) and from 320GB to 500 GB hard disk capacity.

A camera with video features, Intel Wireless WiFi Link 5100 AGN, and a 6-cell battery that gives the user up to 4.4 hrs runtime, it has options for a Blu Ray optical drive.

Even available in PC stores, the DV3 is priced starting at P62,000. More memory and hard drive capacity can up the price to P40,000.

Aside from announcing the availability of the Yukon processors, AMD has also announced the availability of the world's first six-core server processor with direct connect architecture value to every price point with unmatched platform flexibility."

Systems based on the Istanbul processor are expected to be available beginning this month from leading OEMs including Dell, HP, IBM and Sun Microsystems, along with support from motherboard and industry partners.

AMD has also announced new mini 45 nm desktop processors with AMD Athlon II X2 250 and the AMD Phenom II X2 550 black edition.

ONE-INCH thick HP's new DV3 is a 12-inch display ultra-thin notebook that runs on AMD's new Yukon processor

Codenamed Deneb, the new processor consume less power even when running heavy workloads and have options for over-clocking or tuning the core speed. Upon release the AMD Athlon II X2 250 and the AMD Phenom II X2 550 black edition

Raquel F. Gomez

Spreads on RP bonds narrowed in Q1, BSP says

By Michelle V. Remo

SPREADS ON PHILIPPINE BONDS NARrowed in the first quarter and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said this was a sign that investors have begun to recover from the shock following the collapse late last year of Lehman Brothers and other US financial giants.

The BSP said that credit spreads on debt instruments issued by the Philippines, as measured by JP Morgan's EMBI+ (Emerging Market Bond Index), dropped to an average of 472 basis points (bps) in the first quarter from 528 bps in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The spread refers to the difference between the interest rate on benchmark bonds, such as US treasuries, and "riskier" bonds such as those issued by the Philippines.

A narrowing spread signals improving confidence of investors in the supposedly riskier bonds.

"The country's credit spreads eased in the first three months of 2009 relative to spreads in the previous quarter, indicating investors may be regaining some appetite for regional assets amid signs of easing recessionary pressures in major economies," the BSP said in a report on economic and financial developments for the first quarter released Friday.

Although Lehman Brothers and other failed financial institutions were based in the United States, their collapse adversely affected appetite for supposedly riskier bonds issued by emerging economies like the Philippines.

This was why the spreads on bonds from the Philippines and other emerging economies widened immediately after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, which sparked the meltdown of the US financial sector.

Spreads on Philippine bonds have narrowed since then but investment have remained cautious, BSP said, as the Philippines remained to see inflow of portfolio investments in the first quarter.

The BSP said that as of March this year, foreign portfolio investments reversed in a net outflow of $346 million from a net inflow of $168 million in the same period last year.

Officials, however, expressed confidence that investors would eventually realize that the Philippine economy was resilient amid the US-led global turmoil.

BPAP to market 'next wave' cities abroad

By Abigail L. Ho

IN PROMOTING THE COUNtry as a top destination for business process outsourcing, the Business Processing Association of the Philippines (BPAP) will not only focus on the strengths of the Philippines in general, but also of its so-called "Next Wave Cities."

BPAP chief executive Oscar Salazar said the group was set to go on its overseas marketing missions this year, and to these missions, the capabilities of the Next Wave Cities—or those best suited for BPO operations—would be showcased.

"We're going to promote not just the country, but the cities as well. We don't want to have competition to Manila, so that can result in wage inflation and an increase in base rates," he said.

The identified Next Wave Cities include Metro Lapulapu, Metro Cavite, Iloilo, Davao, Bacolod, Angeles-Clark-Subic-Metro Pampanga, Baguio, Butuan-Cagayan de Oro-Iligan-Malaybalay-Cotabato, also to Bohol-Tagbilaran, Cagayan de Oro-Iligan-Malaybalay-Cotabato, also to Tacloban, Legazpi, Naga and Roxas.

Next year, Salazar said BPAP hoped to embark on 10 marketing missions abroad.

"We're working with the [Department of Trade and Industry] and the Commission on Information and Communications Technology[] for the funding," he said.

He related that these international missions were targeted to boost the number of companies that the BPO sector could provide Filipinos, particularly those affected by the global recession.

Displaced employees from the highly technical electronics and semiconductors sector, for instance, could be hired by BPO facilities, he said. Graduates of a wide range of courses could also find potential employment in the BPO industry.

"We want [our graduates] to stay. There's no need for them to go out of the country. They're highly skilled and technically, so they can be hired even straight out of college," he said.

DOF, German body push microinsurance

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE (DOF) said it was cooperating with the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to promote microinsurance that serves the poor.

The DOF said GTZ have laid down a program called Microinsurance Innovations Program for Social Security (MIPSS), which is meant to prepare a risk-based system for microinsurance providers.

The MIPSS is also aimed at developing innovative microinsurance products, including health, and to work on cost-saving measures to enhance channels of microinsurance distribution.

A microinsurance policy is one that has a monthly premium of not more than P1,050 and a maximum coverage of P125,000.

Also, MIPSS has set a goal of developing a national concept on microinsurance in the context of social protection.

Tools aim to consist of developing a national strategy on consumer education and financial literacy, and creating a handbook and training manual on consumer education and protection.

One of the groups that is helping with the MIPSS' goals is Ritratel, which groups eight mutual benefit associations (MBAs) that operate across the country.

In January, Ritratel president Ernesto C. Galicinao said that while the poor have been excluded from existing formal and commercial insurance schemes, low income did not necessarily mean people are not willing to get insured.

Last month, executives of the Manufacturers Life Insurance Co. expressed interest in low-premium insurance but stopped short of committing to go into microinsurance.

PCCI backs Big 3 plea for Pandacan assessor

By Arny R. Barnes

THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF Commerce and Industry (PCCI) has backed the proposal of the country's Big 3 oil companies to get an independent risk assessor to check the safety measures at the Pandacan oil depot in Manila.

"I don't think there will be a problem. It will be good to have an expert do that... that will allay the fears of the people," said Jesus Ysmela, PCCI chair for Trade and Industry.

Ysmela said in a briefing that "we are agreeable" should PCCI be tasked to join in the bidding up the terms of reference for the selection of the risk assessor.

"This is a welcome move since this [] needs the participation of everyone, all sectors, for transparency reasons," Ysmela added.

The so-called Big 3 oil companies have earlier urged all concerned stakeholders—including the Church, civil groups and non-government organizations—to participate in the selection process.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. said they want to prove that the Pandacan depot was safe "with no risk to populations," contrary to the claims of their critics. They insisted they would shoulder the expenses for the assessment, provided the risk assessor is among the top 20 in the world.

Aside from PCCI, the chairpersons of Energy also backed the proposed risk assessment study.

The Big 3 had conducted a similar risk assessment study at the Pandacan depot several years ago, resulting in the shutdown of their operations in Manila.

Clampdown ...

From page B1

posed rule marks the second such policy change in recent weeks, after lawmakers criticized the NTC and mobile phone firms for alleged abusive practices of the latter, including unsolicited "spam" text messages and so-called "value-added services" that result in users' prepaid credits being used up without their consent.

Cabo said the NTC ordered mobile phone firms to extend the shelf life of prepaid load credits by 200 percent—to as long as six months for the biggest "brick" denominations—also in response to consumer complaints.

Under the proposed billing reform, the NTC will ask cellular mobile telephone service providers to submit proposed rates based on the billing scheme within a month of the communications taking effect. It also stressed that the proposed rates should not be higher than the prevailing rates prior to the imposition of the new rules.

Nonetheless, the regulator offered mobile phone firms a concession so that subscribers may continue to choose to be billed on a per-minute basis. The NTC also exempted international call services and unlimited call offerings from the new rules.

Similar to the order extending the validity of load credits, the new policy is expected to have a negative impact on the profitability of mobile phone firms. These companies—in opposing similar proposals in the past—have claimed that the billing method would require significant and costly upgrades to their computer systems while simultaneously cutting revenues here and.

Meanwhile, the NTC also ordered telecommunications firms to reduce the number of so-called "dropped calls" in their systems to a more 2 percent or two dropped calls for every 100 calls made by any user.

It also mandated them to increase their "grade of service" level to 4 percent, meaning that a maximum of only four calls should fail to connect for every 100 calls made.

NTC Commissioner Ruel Canobas issued the order last June 30, 2009.

At the House of Representatives, Kabayan Party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino, who is also a convener of advocacy group TxtPower, urged the NTC to go beyond merely extending the validity of cell phone load by warning completely the registration of prepaid load cards.

"Increasing the shelf life of prepaid load is not enough to address the concerns of millions of subscribers. The rationale behind prepaid registration then is that telcos are denying love consumers should use their purchased load for them to be able to refer to more profits," Palatino said.

"It's not as if this is food or medicine, which will be spoiled if not consumed right away," Palatino said.

Citing a research done his consumer advocacy group TxtPower, Palatino accused the telcos of shelving consumers for years now.

HYUNDAI IS TOPS

IN J.D. POWER AND ASSOCIATES' 2009 INITIAL QUALITY STUDY

When it comes to uncompromising quality, Hyundai goes through great lengths to ensure that every car it creates delivers this promise. Very recently, Hyundai's commitment to quality was affirmed once more when J. D. Power and Associates announced that Hyundai emerged as the highest ranked non-premium nameplate in the 2009 Initial Quality Study℠ (IQS) and ranked fourth among all nameplates. The study revealed that Hyundai owners had fewer problems with their vehicles than any other non-premium car or truck brand.

In addition to Hyundai's strong overall showing, the Hyundai Elantra earned the award for the highest initial quality in the compact car segment. Further, the all-new Hyundai Genesis significantly outperformed the average mid-size premium car.

This year's ranking marks the second time Hyundai has been the highest ranked non-premium nameplate in the last four years, and the second time it finished among the top four overall nameplates. Having also achieved these levels in 2006, highlights this year include a key ranking for the Hyundai Elantra in the compact segment, and a top three segment performance for the Hyundai Accent, which ranked second in the highly competitive sub-compact car segment.

The IQS study measures 229 attributes, including the overall driving experience, engine and transmission, and a broad range of defect and design problems reported by vehicle owners.

The latest results from the J. D. Power and Associates IQS further emphasize Hyundai's successful efforts in advancing vehicle quality, enabling it to gain consumer confidence and ultimately, raise the bar of excellence in the global automotive industry.

Not speaking of excellence, Hyundai continues to make its mark in various segments of the automotive market, especially in the fast-rising SUV segment, with its stylish SUV, the Santa Fe. Snatching both grace and performance that epitomizes Hyundai's enduring quest for perfection and the utmost in quality, the Santa Fe sweetly stands out as an SUV that is unlike any other.

Exquisiteness inside and out

With its magnetic style equated with its impressive ride, Santa Fe's beauty goes way beyond sheet metal deep, making it one of the finest and best ambassadors of the Hyundai brand.

Benchmarking a new platform of engineering in the SUV category, the Santa Fe is steadily remaining with its stately exterior styling. Luxury remains profoundly consistent inside its lavish seven-seat salon with an array of features and conveniences that revel in utmost comfort and pampering. Further, reassuring comfort and safety is an ergonomically crafted cockpit with a high seating position that provides an assured all visibility, fully adjustable steering wheel, and cool blue illuminated instrument panel. Delight in the Santa Fe's luscious leather interior and multiple seating variations for maximum convenience. For additional cargo space, fold down the third row seats and have an enormous flat area with low loading sill, ready to accommodate the occasional domestic load.

Compact powerplant, punchy performance

While its outside charm is undeniably irresistible, the Santa Fe's inner strength is cast as heroic, unleashed by Hyundai's cutting-edge powerplant – a 2.2-liter DRDi engine integrated with Variable Geometry Turbocharger. Affording you unbridled power at surprisingly frugal consumption, the DRDi VGT makes the Santa Fe one of the most fuel-efficient SUVs in its class.

Churning out an intense 235Nm (24.2 kgm) of torque between 1,800 rpm and 2,000 rpm and maximum output of 150ps at 4000rpm, the Santa Fe, in 2WD and AWD variants, delivers power that's comparably at par, or even higher than other SUVs in its class that have bigger engine displacement.

Further, the Santa Fe proves to be a practical and reliable choice. Mated to a 5-speed H-Matic Automatic Transmission, the Santa Fe's 2.2-liter diesel engine works efficiently to provide optimum power to match your journey. With more gears working to put the vehicle in a desired speed, there's less strain on the engine and less fuel is consumed, thus, helping prevent immature wear and tear of the engine, and affording you more savings in the long run.

Getting comfy with the Santa Fe

Putting premium to its seldom-like handling and drivability is its re-engineered suspension that utilizes a reinforced MacPherson strut-type front suspension and a multi-link layout at the rear for more comfortable long drives and confident off-road capability.

As for safety, the Santa Fe is reassuringly at the forefront with Anti-lock Braking System with Electronic Brake force Distribution (EBD) system, 16-inch disc brakes that provide ample stopping power, ISRS airbags, and exceptional build quality underscored by rigid body found in the strictest of Hyundai's engineering facilities.

The Santa Fe also throws in a host of convenience features like a USB slot and auxiliary input in the audio unit for your iPod or other portable MP3 players, 8 speakers for your listening pleasure, a cool box to store your refreshments in, a concealable mirror, and plenty of cubby holes and pockets for small items, adding up to its seemingly boss free accommodation.

With the Santa Fe, Hyundai defines your expectations of a virtually peerless SUV in one class-leading package that translates into beauty and brawn. So go on ahead and be edgy or stylish as you please—with Santa Fe, the best of both worlds is at your command.

For more inquiries, or to schedule a test drive, visit your nearest authorized Hyundai dealer today.

Hotel Room for P785?

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2009 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B2

BUSINESS Monday

Business Editor Marga Quiniquito-Espino

Inquire about wholesale price.

Despite crisis, firms keep CSR projects alive

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS IS pushing more people into poverty, and the picture is even more grim in developing countries like the Philippines, according to the Asian Development Bank.

The Manila-based lender has thus encouraged governments in the region not to go slow on pump-priming to cushion the effects of the economic downturn.

Cash-strapped governments that are grappling with soaring budget deficits, however, can not do it alone.

The private sector is then called on to do its share in ensuring that the millions get access to vital social services and programs needed to keep them afloat until prayers there to take advantage of the rebound down the road.

Companies in the Philippines, fortunately, are ready and willing to take on the challenge to remain good corporate citizens despite pressure on their bottom line brought about by the downturn.

In an interview with the Inquirer, Linda Angeles, president of the League of Corporate Foundations that is encouraging companies to go into CSR, shares her views on how small and Philippine companies are responding to the challenge to do even more corporate social responsibility projects in these trying times.

Q: Given the economic difficulties companies are facing, do you see companies increasing their budgets for CSR activities?

A: From our discussions with our members and partners, as well as initial results from surveys that we are doing, the general observation is that investments in CSR continue to grow despite the crisis. This is proof that companies are looking beyond the short-term effects of the crisis and considering the long-term sustainability of the businesses.

A COMPANY employee takes time out to give the less-fortunate a better education. CSR programs related to education are popular among Philippine firms. (INQUIRER.NET FILE)

Q: What are the pet projects of companies these days?

A: The majority of CSR programs continue to address education issues.

This is evidenced by the strong push by private partnerships that have been developed by companies with the department of education, local governments and NGOs.

The private sector continues to invest in school buildings, information and communication technology, teacher training programs, nutrition and health programs, books and scholarships.

In recent years, there has been increasing focus on the environment, especially with regard to climate change issues.

Companies, especially those in the energy sector, are stepping up efforts to reduce and mitigate carbon emissions. We expect this trend to continue with more companies to engage in programs related to the environment.

Companies are also taking an interest in micro-finance and livelihood development opportunities. In addition, companies also contribute significantly to reading programs, housing and disaster relief efforts, in coordination with NGOs and government agencies.

Q: For LCP, how do you propose to get companies to increase related-about CSR?

A: In a time of crisis, it is very important to link CSR to long-term sustainability and to show the business benefits of practicing CSR.

The crisis can also be seen as an opportunity to foster greater (in relevance and importance of CSR—now more than ever, them-cause step up their efforts.

Q: Do you see more companies going beyond more volunteer projects and less cash outlays?

A: In this regard, it is very important for companies to integrate CSR into their core business. Every line manager, in effect, must be a CSR manager. CSR is more than just doing good, it should be part of the way we do business.

A responsible company must measure not only the financial bottom line but also its social and environmental impact.

One action that we want to dispel is that you have to have a big budget to do CSR. A lot of SMEs, in fact, are practicing CSR through their value chain practices, benefiting both the communities they operate in and their business operations.

There are many ways to do CSR and not all require huge investments.

Q: What is LCP's message for the CSR expo this year?

A: For this year, we are calling on the business community to respond to the '2020' brought about by the crisis by offering Skills, Opportunities and Sustainability.

The challenge is to practice CSR as usual, or even more than usual, despite business turmoil.

A particular focus for this Expo is on the area of Enterprise Development and how companies can help those at the base of the pyramid through business strategies.

We have partnered with organizations such as PlanetMe and Tambuyog Development to help us reach out to the micro and small enterprise sector.

Q: What for you is the main reason why companies must pursue CSR projects?

A: CSR helps ensure a company's sustainability. By practicing CSR, companies build trust with stakeholders and protect themselves from risk and crisis.

When integrated into the business process, CSR also helps ensure the sustainability of a company's value chain and boosts its competitiveness.

CSR is no longer "optional" in today's business environment. Companies must do their part in helping its communities and stakeholders grow and prosper, thereby also ensuring the business sustainability.

LCP is hosting its 9th CSR Expo: Business Unusual: Skills, Opportunity, Sustainability [2020] on July 9 and 10 at the SMX Convention Center).

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Making sound group decisions

By Lila Bartolome-Ahrens
Contributor

TEAMS SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS and making decisions are part of corporate life. Because it's a fact: People don't live in a vacuum.

In certain cases, individual decisions may be called for (although they may be regarded as fairly simple and straightforward), but in many cases, decisions have to be made with other people.

Human resources experts call them "team decisions."

But how should corporate managers and their teams arrive at good team decisions?

Consensus

If Keith Kelly, author of "Team Decision Techniques: A Practical Guide to Successful Team Outcomes," says group decisions ought to be made once the maximum amount of data and experience (both good and bad), plus a diversity of opinions.

He says one way is for team members to understand the meaning of "consensus." This, he says, means: "We all can live with X" as a solution to a problem and we all agree to go along with whatever X requires us to do."

Both offer these tips for reaching a consensus:

1. Be frank and honest when expressing your ideas and opinions. Be 2 cent worth. Don't fall into the trap of silencing your ideas to move with the drift of the discussion.

Be sure it is also important to clarify ideas. Remember this often quoted statement about communication gaps: "I know you think you understand what you thought I said. But I am not sure that what you heard is what I meant."

This simply means that in miscommunication, there is "no other guy's fault"—it's linked two for communication to break down.

A communication expert interpret this as: If one party is unclear, ambiguous or shaky in rendering a given point, it's up to the other party to request a clarification.

2. Don't judge or criticize even the most outrageous ideas when initial unwisely and don't edit what is said.

"Let's team members state their cases and ask questions. If you participate by suggesting concepts that are unusual or controversial, chances are, they will stay participating. Some of the best discoveries in the world were made when team members participated in this exercise.

3. Be willing to compromise and be flexible. Be supportive leaders and those who facilitate team meetings should avoid personality conflicts, power plays and backroom politicking.

"Such behavior destroys trust," he advises.

4. Make sure all team members have the same information. Keith says that nothing stifles feedback more than finding out that other team members received more or different information.

5. Allow enough time to reach consensus. Just don't take too much time. He argues that people get tired and lose interest in the topics being discussed and their successes.

Good decisions

Keith says good decisions are measured against two components: Quality and commitment.

"A quality decision takes into account all of the facts and makes good use of that information," says Keith.

But he considers agreement meeting at an effective and productive decision without commitment. "If people don't have the commitment to carry it out, then it is a useless decision," he argues.

Benefits

Keith says team decision-making brings out truth, even unusual ideas. "Team members different from one's own have may spark other, even better, thoughts," he adds.

He also says misunderstandings and bias is an avoided. "Each member of the team draws his or her issues which should be incorporated into the outcome. Any potential misunderstandings are removed up before the solution is implemented," he says.

Other benefits derived from setting team decisions are a an increase, namely increased learning and personal growth. "Team members learn the underlying issues and make up their mind about outcomes," he says. "They also gain an increased understanding of the big picture as other decisions affect their respective areas."

This enables them to understand the difficulties and trade-offs of choosing between conflicting options."

Automated election fraud

AUTOMATED ELECTION fraud like manual election fraud can be divided into two parts:

1. Fraud cheating in the counting and preparation of precinct election returns.

2. Wholesale fraud in the transmission and consolidation of the municipal, district, city and provincial levels.

Fraud usually does not happen at the national level since there are fewer numbers to transmit and canvass, and there are many eyes focused on the process.

We will start by discussing how fraud can be done on the OMR (optical mark reading) counting machines.

Then we will discuss how fraud can take place in transmission and canvassing.

The Comelec claims that we will finally have clean and honest elections because the 2010 elections will be fully automated.

The old cheaters who are computer illiterate had met in Comelec or with the automated system's vendors may indeed find that some old tricks will no longer work.

Wholesale and manual tampering of ERs and COCs will no longer be possible.

Transparency

The beauty of the old system of striking names of candidates voted for, public reading of votes in front of watchers and citizens, tallying and manual preparation of election returns was that it was public.

At least there could have been enough eyes to see trouble. Maybe sometimes due to guess and guess, people would just keep quiet.

In the new OMR system we are still fond the ballot into the machine the next thing they will see is the printed election returns.

Whether their votes were properly counted they will not know.

Transparency at the precinct level is gone.

Fraud can take place and the voters and watchers at the precinct will not know if fraud has taken place.

Comelec's claims

Comelec claims that the AES (automated election system) cannot be hacked and that the source code will be open for inspection.

There is no good for Comelec's IT officers, but they do not make automated elections safer from fraud. In fact, they set electric sewers that cover the real seven where fraud can take place.

The Hindenburg Electric Encyclopedia Technologica an automated election system is a computer, either it is that or that machines or machines' programs.

Hackers generally are micro computers and telephone lines to obtain access.

In computing, the term is used in a wider sense to mean using software for enjoyment or self-education, not necessarily involving remembered access.

Hacking is not the problem and, therefore, spending time and money to prevent hacking is not very useful.

If only outsiders would call you in your home then having polled machines, spreadsheets, etc. will ensure you safety.

But if you live in the company of thieves, you can still be robbed. That is what the police refer to as "inside job."

The greatest danger of fraud in the 2010 computerized elections will come from insiders in Comelec and some private vendors are from outsiders.

In a recent meeting of the Management Association of the Philippines Election Automation with representatives of the Federal Commission and SEC Commissioner Guillermo Parayno, we asked him whether his agencies had been hacked.

His answer was no, any intrusions were always by tamper.

Source code inspection

The other point Comelec likes to stress is that the source code of the OMR counting machines will be available for inspection by computer experts.

The inspection of the source code is practically useless.

OMR machines are used in schools for scoring tests and in survey companies for tabulating survey results.

Members of the administrative staff in schools and survey companies do not change the source code. They provide a scoring or tabulating table to match how the OMR machine scores a test or tabulates a survey.

By changing the table, fraud is easily committed.

It is impossible to have on the OMR counting machines all that is needed is to download a new counting table that changes the when a shaded circle is considered.

In most cases the candidates that want to cheat are those that are the re-modified so that votes will be switched.

This does not have to be done on all machines.

If done so even just 10 percent of the OMR machines, a fight must may be reversed in favor of those who are cheating.

How would the counting tables be switched? Since the OMR machines are connected to the Internet, it is possible for an outside party to coordinate with Comelec or system insider people, to enable an unseen computer to load the fraudulent table.

At the end of counting, the original table can be reloaded so that any tests would indicate that the machines are counting correctly and honestly.

It would also be possible for someone that seems to be authorized to quickly insert a USB memory stick that would load the fraudulent table.

Fraud at provincial level

While the Comelec has budgeted P8.2 billion for machines instead of OMR machines, it has only budgeted P200 million for transmission and P300 million for canvassing.

There is no provision for parallel transmission and canvassing. Therefore, there is no provision for audit.

In the old manual system, the hand copy of the precinct ERs were brought to the municipality to be read and entered in the computer, the votes which was visible to watchers. Watchers could compare the statement of votes with their own copies of the ER. Before the ER was read and added to the statement of votes, the authenticity of the ER was first verified.

This process took time and caused delays what lawyers regard, but at least citizens could see what was going on, hopefully under save that votes were properly canvassed and at the very least be aware that frauds had taken place.

The Comelec AES has no safeguards against tablets initiated fraud. It assumes that the Comelec and the vendor officials, managers and staff are absolutely honest. It assumes that an automated system will not commit mistakes or fraud.

In the Comelec system, mistakes can take place, but it will not be discovered until after the beneficiaries of fraud have been proclaimed.

Good luck with the election protests by the representative of the losing candidates.

How can fraud be done?

While RA 9369 provides for the printing of up to 30 copies of ERs and their posting at the precinct, the single transmission and canvassing system can be very much flawed.

Some precincts claim that one local candidates could be proclaimed in less than 48 hours.

A COMELEC technician samples the touch screen voting panel of the automated voting machines.

Unfortunately, the political parties and citizens may cannot prove that fact and would not be able to point to fraudulent manipulation before the declared proclamation of the favored candidates, as what is usually happened in fraud.

It is interesting that while it was said that the close examination and canvassing in the old manual system created many opportunities for fraud, in the new automated system, very fast transmission and canvassing in 2010 may lead to massive fraud, bypassing the time consuming safeguards.

I would propose that legislation be passed to deliberately institute auditing steps at each level.

There is nothing wrong with the automated system taking two weeks. There is a saying that haste makes waste. Let's not have our new leaders elected by automated election fraud.

Sensational case

Assume has demonstrated how fraudulently it was able to massively change the ERs of three precincts in Maz in last year's ARMM election.

Three precincts reported 0 votes because the number of votes exceeded the number of voters.

Intentionally was able to repeatedly change the votes in the three precincts.

The Internet and the World Wide Web are powerful tools for doing good. They can also be used for evil.

Good or evil

My company uses the Internet and collaboration software to be able to access our customers' computers and manipulate them as if we were onsite. The same could be done with the Comelec OMR machines and transmission and canvassing computers.

What could we do with such remote access and manipulation capabilities?

Someone could access OMR machines and change their vote counting tables temporarily to make some candidates get votes and others lose votes.

After counting, the proper tables would be restored so that the fraud would go undetected.

The same technology could be used to access municipal canvassing systems to change the COC prior to transmission. The last votes to be canvassed could be to switch votes between candidates.

Something similar could be done on provincial canvassing computers.

Key safeguards

However, instead of allowing the proclaimed COC, one could change the statement of votes of some municipalities. Then changes would be reflected on the provincial COC.

How do we safeguard our vote?

In order to prevent automated elections fraud, certain safeguards have to be instituted. These include:

1. The OMR machines should not have any network connection. The various results should be copied to USB memory sticks, which can subsequently be loaded on a separate PC that will transmit the results to the Comelec canvassing systems at the municipality and to the provincial canvassing systems at the provincial capitol.

2. The above parties should be provided with their own PCs to be able to produce their own COCs. If the Comelec COC does not match the COCs produced by other parties, a careful review should be done prior to transmission to the provincial level.

3. The certified municipal COC should then be transmitted to the multiple groups defined above. Again, the Comelec COC should be compared with the other COCs and the reasons for discrepancies should be determined.

4. The certified Provincial COC should again be transmitted to multiple parties.

The Comelec and Congressional Canvass should again be compared to the parallel canvasses to assure that fraud is minimized or made as possible.

5. Each of the concerned groups should make their results available on their websites for the public to assess.

If these proposed measures are followed, there will be true transparency and automated fraud will be substantially reduced.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is president of Systems Advocates Consult Inc. Feedback at comments@mapi.org.ph. For previous articles, please visit www.mapi.org.ph.)

Handset market goes to extremes

Consumers going for either cheap or expensive phones

By Abigail L. Ho

BOTH operators and device manufacturers are turning to emerging markets to pick up sales.

THE WORLD OF MOBILE PHONES IS being increasingly split between those who have a little and those who have a lot.

According to Juniper Research's "Low Cost Handsets: Markets, Opportunities and Forecasts 2009-2014," the mobile phone market is being polarized, as handset manufacturers take advantage of increasing consumer interest in low-cost phones and high-end wireless devices.

"The market is effectively polarizing into two groupings...ensure [low] and high-end devices. This means that the market for mid-range devices is being squeezed and vendors of such devices are suffering," the report said.

The report revealed that from this year to 2014, sales of low-cost mobile handsets should grow 22 percent to more than 700 million.

High-end smartphones, on the other hand, that boast of many functions such as easy Internet accessibility and mobile computing, were expected to account for 27 percent of overall mobile phone sales worldwide by 2014, up from 13 percent last year.

Increasingly, both operators and device manufacturers were turning to emerging markets to pick up their sales and fuel future growth, according to Juniper Research said.

"The developments of low-cost devices was critical to achieve this, Juniper Research said.

"With around 60 percent of new mobile users set to come from emerging markets over the next six years, it is essential that operators and vendors work together to dilute the price barriers associated with mobile technology and to provide a compelling support through the development of specific social and personal services," said report author Andrew Bleasdale.

"However, it is clear that commercial success will only be achieved if operators adopt revolutionary new business models and if govt restrictions can be persuaded not to place excessive taxes and duties on device sales and imports," he added.

In emerging markets such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, the report says the benefits of bringing the total cost of ownership for device and service to less than $1 "are already reaping benefits" by way of added take-up.

The development of content-driven services was likewise providing a much-needed incentive for first-time cell phone users to keep on using their devices, the report added.

First-quarter handset shipments showed mostly silky operations and manufacturers should work double-time to fuel device sales.

According to ABI Research's "Mobile Devices Market Forecast Analysis," global mobile phone shipments in the first quarter dropped 12 percent to 235.6 million as compared to the more than 269 million shipped in the same period last year.

Vis-à-vis the previous quarter, first-quarter shipments were down 20 percent.

ABI Research said that was only the tip of the iceberg, as this downward trend was expected to continue through the fourth quarter.

"The mobile phone industry has long been characterized by its seasonal trends, where the first quarter always delivers a sequential decline after a busy holiday season. However, the drop in this first quarter was especially sharp," said ABI Research practice director Kevin Burden.

He said the industry had too elusive but to face the reality of shipment reductions, and react accordingly.

"The industry and consumers have gone into production mode. Preventing profitability has led handset manufacturers to produce less and to operators and retail outlets holding smaller inventories," he said.

"Consumers are also realizing that many of the features they desire are already in the handset they currently use, and are willing to forgo an upgrade until they have more confidence in their own futures," he added.

Although expected to be hit quite hard as compared with other regions, the Asia-Pacific handset market proved to be relatively resilient, posting only an 8-percent year-on-year decline in shipments in the first quarter—which could be considered "a spot of encouragement."

The region accounted for more than a fifth the volume of the next largest region.

MOVEMENTS

Lowe Manila has new ECD

LEIGH REYES, ONE OF PHILIPPINE ADVERTISING's most respected executive creative directors, is Lowe Manila's new ECD.

Reyes' entry into Lowe Manila is considered a coming coup: an ECD with impeccable creative credentials. Reyes is the winner of the country's first Gold CLIO and World Press Gold. Her work has been recognized at Cannes, Adfest, Australian Award and the New York Festivals.

As a testament to her stature in the industry, Reyes was selected in 2008 to join the world's elite fifteen stalwarts in one of Cannes' jewish glass juries, the Cannes Lions Radio Jury. That same year she was also invited to serve as judge on the Adfest Press and Poster Jury.

Reyes will be officially on board in July.

Oakwood names GM

SAGAMOO PREMIER JOINT VENTURE CENTER Manila welcomes seasoned hotelier Brian E. Connolly as its general manager.

Connolly has 32 years of global hotel experience from stints with the Sheraton, Hilton, InterContinental, Fairmont and Oakwood. He started as a corporate trainee at Sheraton and swiftly moved up the corporate ladder, assuming the position of General Manager with Sheraton Company at the young age of 31. His successes in the United States eventually brought him to the Middle East and Asia, where his credentials were further enhanced with stints in various types of properties, including international hotel chains, corporate and convention hotels and opening a five-star hotel in China.

Connolly's assignment to Oakwood Premier Joy—Nostalg Center Manila is his first in the Philippines. He leads the pre-opening team of this new property in Ortigas Center, which is scheduled to open in the third quarter of 2009.

McDonald named P&G CEO

ROBERT A. MCDONALD, FORMER P&G GENERAL manager and president for Procter and Gamble (P&G) of Philippines, has been named president and chief executive of P&G.

McDonald has also been appointed a member of P&G's board of directors.

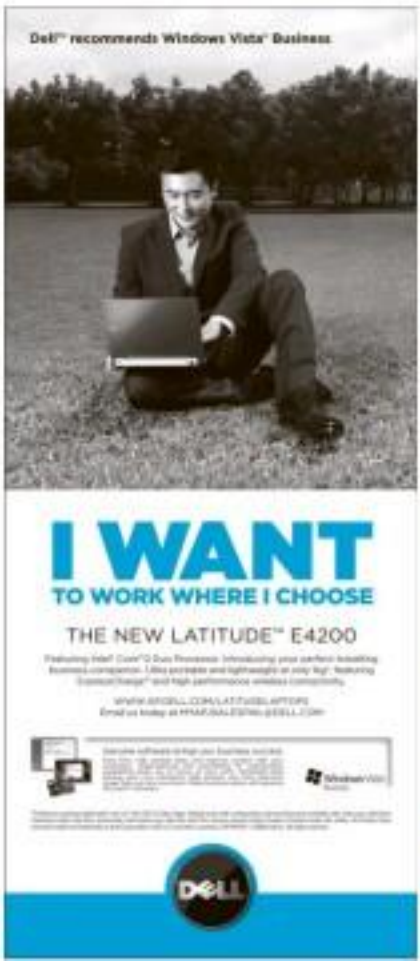
Jim McNerney, presiding director of P&G's Board said: "Bob McDonald is the most broadly and globally experienced CEO in P&G history. He has nearly 30 years of brand-building, market-development, global business unit and geographic operations leadership experience across the Company and throughout the world. Bob was elected president and chief executive through a rigorous, disciplined and multiyear succession process led by the Board."

SAS MD in RP expands reach

SAS, THE LEADER IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS software and services, has appointed Sonny Ruiliti to command the SAS operations in Indonesia and Vietnam. In addition to the Philippines.

The organization is looking to Sonny's leadership to establish Indonesia and Vietnam as rapidly emerging countries, while continuing the success in the Philippine subsidiary.

Ruiliti has been with the company for six years, under his watch as managing director, SAS Philippines revenue turnover increased twelve times and maintained an average year-on-year income growth of 40 percent in the last six years.



BUSINESS Monday

Prepared for retirement? Think again

By Dixim L. Lucas

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW old you are, but if you thought last year that you're all covered when your retirement time comes, you might want to think again.

Given the financial upheaval caused by the global economic crisis, HSBC-based banking giant HSBC believes that a "perfect storm," of demographic, institutional and financial elements, is poised to derail people's retirement plans "unless they prepare adequately for it."

This recommendation is among the insights revealed in the latest survey of the bank's HSBC Insurance unit, which was published recently.

Perfect storm

"A perfect storm is confronting pensions planning, created by an aging population, falling pension funds values, a drop in state and employer contributions and an economic downturn which is causing people to make tough financial choices," HSBC group chair Stephen Green said about the findings.

According to the findings of the fifth annual Future of Retirement study, people's short-term survival instincts "overpower" behavior, to create "serious long-term pension 'downturn deficits.'"

It also noted that there is "a continuing lack of pensions planning, even though people are unsure that they are likely to live longer" which is being exacerbated by "poor levels of financial understanding, education and access to advice."

Also during difficult financial times, people are more concerned with protecting their possessions in the short-term than ensuring they can look forward to a financially secured retirement, the survey revealed.

"The consequence of these combined factors is that many people will struggle to make ends meet when they come to retire, unless they urgently review their priorities and planning," the Life HC study concluded.

The survey called on findings from 10,000 respondents in Brazil, Canada, China, France, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The results are used by HSBC to structure financial solutions for an estimated 120 million clients worldwide.

The latest edition—dubbed "It's Time to Prepare"—identified a "preparedness gap" in people's pensions planning worldwide, with nearly nine out of 10 people feeling ill-prepared for their retirement.

It found that only 13 percent of the respondents feel fully prepared for their retirement, and 86 percent are unsure of what income they will receive in retirement.

Only 27 percent feel they fully understand their long-term finances, while 43 percent have undertaken some planning for later life—but still remain unclear about what their retirement income will look like.

More alarmingly, 14 percent have done "no retirement planning at all."

"The preparedness gap reveals that families need greater support and guidance to effectively handle their finances, not simply to schools and colleges but through trusted advisors providing professional financial guidance," Green said.

Golden opportunity

"If people prepare adequately for the long-term, an extended leave like ours presents a golden opportunity for many—but now is the time for people to seriously consider ensuring their pensions contributions is improve their prospects of a comfortable retirement," he added. "The cost of present inaction is likely to be high."

Nonetheless, the study found sufficient basis for hope in strengthening the financial prospects of people of all ages, as their more trusted retirement.

The so-called "advice gap" showed that there is a need for solid financial advice to help this market, which financial service firms like HSBC can provide.

The survey revealed this advice gap finding the lack of perceptions or insufficient financial education and guidance.

A full 40 percent of respondents have never had any basis of financial education, and 29 percent felt "fairly unprepared" for their retirement, according to the findings.

Almost half—or 47 percent of respondents—have never had any form of professional financial advice, it added.

"This year's report reveals a need for people to have access to more and better financial advice and guidance to help them survive the downturn while making the right financial decisions for the long-term," said HSBC Insurance group managing director Chris Bunting in a statement.

But perhaps the most alarming results of the survey showed that, in trying to prevent their finances during the ongoing crisis, many people are actually putting themselves in greater financial danger, inadvertently.

People are putting little attention to long-term considerations such as their likely retirement needs, focusing instead on purely practical short-term concerns, which they focus on, demand, HSBC said.

"General insurance solutions—motor, travel, home and even pet insurance—are seen as a greater priority than addressing longer-term needs around insuring health or income, even when job security is at a premium," the survey said.

Delay in retirement

And despite global economic uncertainty, only 6 percent said they intend to take out income protection insurance in the next 12 months compared to 16 percent insuring their home.

Also, as a result of the economic downturn, 92 percent of people have changed some element of their finances, with only 19 percent still on track to retire, according to their original plans.

Because of the crisis, about 17 percent are reducing existing their savings or stopping saving for retirement altogether, while 18 percent have used savings to pay off debt.

Along with the global trend, 9 percent of respondents now expect to delay their retirement.

"The survey reveals the lack of understanding people have around their long-term investment needs, said Clarence Constantine, financial services consultancy director Mark Fenig, whose group conducted the survey. "They are less well-educated or aware when trying to understand these needs and to act on them, than with their other financial requirements.

"In the economic perfect storm' scenario, it is important that people are encouraged to understand long-term risks and to manage them effectively while people are taking more responsibility for themselves, there is also a definite role for financial institutions to contribute, and to build on, their work to educate and inform," he said.

GOINGS-ON

Sun Cellular bags award

SUN CELLULAR HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED THE Most Promising Service Provider of the Year during the 2009 Frost & Sullivan Asia Pacific ICT Awards held recently in Singapore.

Frost & Sullivan is a partnership company with a history of providing innovative growth solutions and strategies to some of the world's leading Global 1000 companies.

Frost & Sullivan's awards are presented to companies that demonstrate best practices and outstanding performance in areas such as market leadership, innovations and business strategies.

St. Luke's opens center

ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER RECENTLY launched its Center for Quality and Patient Safety, the first office dedicated to the country's health industry.

Led by Dr. Jaime Galvante, St. Luke's SVP for medical affairs and chief executive officer, the center aims to minimize, if not prevent, errors in hospitals by having a partnership with patients and every-body involved in giving medical care—from the doctors and nurses down to the staff delivering basic services like food and linen.

Some its components: the Office for Quality and Patient Safety has already evolved and transformed its Senior Executive Executive Walk-Rounds and continuing Education Training and Clinical Programs.

BDO, Saudi Bank ink pact

BDO RECENTLY SIGNED A JOINT venture service agreement with the National Commercial Bank (NCB) of Saudi Arabia in another move to further financial presence in the Middle East. NCB, assessed to be the first established bank in Saudi Arabia, has about 200 branches throughout the kingdom.

For non-account holders, NCB remittance transactions may be channeled at any of BDO's more than 600 branches nationwide or at any 2,000 Cebuana Cashier or 5,000 Palawan Express, 7,000 Hippopotamus Money Transmission Service franchisees and BDO's financial services and cash bank partners.

Smart WiMAX on

SMART COMMUNICATIONS INC. has taken its first steps to massively deploying WiMAX technology across the country.

The country's leading wireless services provider has undertaken tests of the powerful wireless broadband platform with equipment manufacturer Motorola, paving the way for rapid rollout of the new network. Motorola is the principal contractor for Clearwire Communications, the leading provider of mobile WiMAX service worldwide.

WiMAX or Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access is a telecommunications technology that provides wireless broadband access to cordless area spanning several kilometers.

Lopez tops in taxes

FIRST GEN CORPORATION, THE country's leading diversified renewable energy company, has emerged the second biggest taxpayer for the local government of Pasig City.

First Gen's tax contributions to the Pasig government is a plaque of recognition from the city government during an awarding ceremony held last June 30 as part of celebrations for the 438th Araw ng Pasig.

It pays for companies to take care of talent

By Abigail L. Ho

FOR ECONOMIC DOWNTURN ECONOMIZING businesses to cut costs here and there, sometimes going to the painful extent of letting people go.

While this may make sense at the outset, companies should think twice, before 18 times before doing something that drastic.

The People Management Association of the Philippines says businesses should focus on retaining/keeping their human resources if they want to be able to ride the recovery wave when it comes.

In a presentation at the Philippine International Franchise Conference and Expo 2009 last week, PMAP president and Corporate Executive Board's managing director Lynn Abella-Lim said the best route was to combine "buying, building and borrowing" talents.

"Buying" means sourcing for new talents, "building" means further honing the skills and knowledge of existing employees, and "borrowing" means outsourcing certain company functions to outsiders.

Delicate balance

Striking a balance among these three may be a bit difficult, considering the crisis, she says, but this is the best way to go if businesses want to come out stronger when the recession ends.

"There's a need to mix these three when managing talents. They can be our biggest competitive advantage," she says.

Pros and cons

Before deciding what to do, she says it is important for businesses to consider the pros and cons of each talent management technique.

Companies should consider "buying" talent when their internal talent pool can no longer meet urgent operational requirements for critical positions.

This has a number of advantages: for one, it takes less effort and a shorter time-frame to see through.

Yet another, the talent that will be acquired will be ready to deploy, save the need for any orientation or training.

Negative impact

On the flip side, businesses should also consider that this may negatively impact the morale of homegrown talents and possibly "dishearten" the compensation patterns of the company.

There is also a possibility of encountering culture fit and retention problems.

When "borrowing" seems the best option to be the right way to go, Abella-Lim says companies can opt to "build" their existing talents. However, this is good only if there are enough resources and time to train people.

Assuming that the budget is there and that the employees is not in a rush to be in employees acquire or enhance particular skills and knowledge, the "build" route is the best to achieve longer.

Companies can tailor fit skills to their requirements, ensuring that employees will be equipped with the right skill sets for the future business.

Also, talents will be able to build within the organizational culture.

Being given an opportunity to enhance themselves professionally and even personally can also improve the odds of employees staying in the company longer.

Abella-Lim says companies can also "borrow" talents from outsiders. Contracting/sourcing programs will also ease companies a huge sum of money with the returns on investment expected to be seen in the short-term.

Another strategy that companies can employ is talent "borrowing," she says. This is good for well-defined functions that are not part of a firm's core business.

Some of the advantages of "borrowing" talents include alleviating the workload of existing employees and having more flexibility in terms of service commitment since outsourced workers do not have fixed contracts.

On the other side, outsourcing may sometimes prove to be more expensive than getting permanent employees. Also, outsourced talents may encounter culture fit problems and even pose a security risk to the company.

"In a recent survey we conducted, most of the respondents said they would rather build talent. But if the need is urgent, then you can't do this," she says. "On borrowing talents, you can't outsource if the position is critical."

A crisis situation such as this one makes the need to strike a balance among these three strategies even more crucial, she says.

Employee training

No matter which route a company chooses, she says it is important that employee training and development be given much weight, and that training budgets, or at least training hours, are maintained even when the economy is down.

For companies that feel the need to cut their training budgets, they can opt to conduct activities that will still enhance employee skills without breaking the bank too much. Longer on-the-job trainings, for example, can be implemented.

If there is some room to move, companies must also invest in increasing their training budgets and to focus their training programs to enable them to take advantage of opportunities in crisis and prepare for the upturn.

"People are our greatest assets. Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Those that are able to leverage will outperform others during the upturn," she says. "During times of crisis, it is important to think long-term. Nurture a good relationship with your employees."

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

PROSPERITY 11. (first row, seated from left) Kenyalyn de Guia, Wayne Jimenez, Jasper Serrano, MM Yu; (second row, seated from center) Raquel de Leyola and Christine Ong; (third row, seated) Dino Dalmacio and Rosa Calalayan; (second at the back) Iggy Rodriguez; (standing from left to right) Don Saldajeno, Raya Martin, and Theo Yee-Santos; (not in photo) Patty Evangelista

New CCP Thirteen Artists showcase art 'that's always new'

By Jessica Zafra
Contributor

The batch of awardees has the highest number of women in the awards' history

THE THIRTEEN Artists Awards was the brainchild of then Cultural Center of the Philippines curator Raphael Chabet, who handpicked the first batch in 1970, who in turn were entrusted to have followed the spirit of the original Thirteen Modernists, led by Victorio Edades.

The awards' blueprint has not changed. Recipients are artists hailed as innovators who have made a break with tradition and perhaps started new styles and traditions. They are new and veteran of the line who make decisive gender in the gallery.

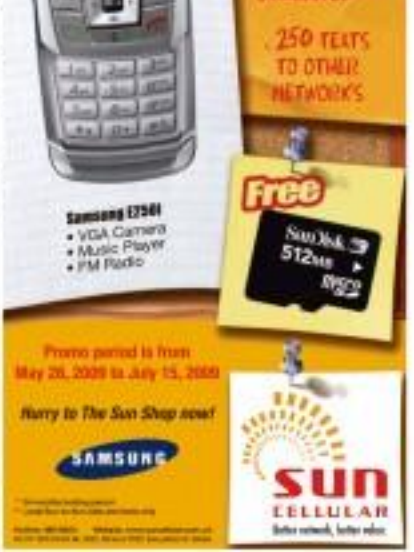
CCP Visual Arts and Museo Division head Karen Flavier, a former recipient herself, says only the selection process has changed, but the criteria have remained the same. The artists "must demonstrate" work is given much weight.

The award is bestowed by peers. The jurors for 2009 are critic Alfred Lagmay-Ramirez and poet awardees Jun Lim Sen and Mark Justiniano.

Flavier-Ortiz is that this group has the highest number of females in the awards' history. Ahead of the installation The new artists Exhibit at the CCP starting July 9, Inquirer takes a glimpse of the artists and their works.

Rom Celebrano is fond of the term "curation" that is about digging into human anguish, frailty and aspiration that supposedly reinforces his "wish to live to simply to prove life, to be one with Nature." He believes that to achieve this, he

NEW CCP C2



Unusual peace in Kathmandu

DURBAR Marg, a scene Kathmandu's boulevard deserted at the height of a citywide strike, offers a rare, unobstructed view of the Royal Palace.

I HAVE BEEN THERE BEFORE. SO nothing in Kathmandu that one sees comes as shocking. Overbooking, missing immigration and customs, tussling over my luggage to the person next in queue are, well, frankly a funny ride into the city.

The person who met me said the vehicle was trapped at the airport. A soldier's strike took the entire city of Kathmandu by surprise that morning, forcing businesses, schools and everything else to close down, cordoning all vehicles off the streets.

More flights arrived. A large crowd of stranded travelers continued to build up in the waiting area. An irritated and pale-by hour (started), angry and worried, took over. Only tourists were limited to the city in earnest, dusty buses hemmed with Ministry of Tourism signs that allowed free passage through heavily guarded streets.

With no other transportation in sight, grumbling locals walked into town, pulling and dragging heavy luggage behind them. Only a few were lucky enough to find porters willing to walk heavy baggage into the city.

The first bus had just left. After waiting an hour and a half, I chewed my way into the second bus, only to be told to get off for, since the driver had to go for lunch. He'd drive off and never return.

An hour later, another Minister bus came, unloading departing tourists and their luggage out of one narrow door, everyone simultaneously pushing and cursing their way into and out of the bus. With much shouting, jogging, children and loans were thrown through open windows. It was non-stop typical-fleeting in my way into the proverbial eye of a needle.

There was no way I would make that bus. I shoved my way to it only for a little bit, this pole, and little did I know that it did. I was told later that afternoon when I was safely in town that buses suddenly stopped going to the airport without any warning.

This strike was called to oppose the policies of another so-called terrible issues. But the anti-public meetings were scheduled in the evening. Until then, the city floated in a state of suspension. Reinforced by army presence everywhere, people were not going anywhere.

Surreal street scene

Kathmandu at a standstill was surreal. Streets usually filled with total chaos of people, rickshaws and horn-tooting vehicles all raising up clouds of dust were totally deserted. Bad dog Ghatti smiled over the city, something I never imagined I would experience.

Normally polluted city air was more again high-altitude crisp, invigorating and breathable. Without pollution, the sky turned an unrecognizingly blue, providing a magnificent, close view of the mountains enclosing Kathmandu Valley surrounding it. Silence. Instead of a cloud of gray pollution.

It was a rare opportunity, a great day for rediscovering Kathmandu without being assaulted by the usual traffic, dust and pollution, so out of my hotel I went on foot, avoiding the packs of stray dogs that roamed Kathmandu streets, walking on the broad, cracked and uneven sidewalks of Durbar Marg. Far south boulevard at the center of the city leading to the former Royal Palace.

Today, in the total absence of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, I noticed for the first time that trees lined both sides of the short boulevard, trees having been garbaged a trace of urban elegance sadly swallowed up without warning in recent years by the heavy unregulated tumory assault of everyday city life. Progress, in other words.

Urban elegance

Inspired by the love on Durbar Marg, I set out to discover other urban elegance remained in discrete Kathmandu.

The heroic tree who were cut that day walked unobtrusively in the middle of streets, not on the sidewalks which were dangerously broken down due to constant automobiles must for car tire pavement to make room for the semi-ritzy fit on wide ground.

While I was walking on the safe, fine center of the street pavement, the entire streetscape unfolded, as urban vistas never seen in the constant yard of traffic. What a great place to know the city from.

The low-key imposing but unpretentious Mediaeval-style Former Royal Palace, flanked by strangely gardens behind it still gilded from at the head of Durbar Marg, a royal ensemble, modest and perfected by Western standards, & into the unassuming everyday low-rise Kathmandu urbanscape.

Walking away from the palace into the maze of widening, narrow streets in the older section of central Kathmandu, strong urge to record and social gatherings in the rundown, peeling, jumble of old and new buildings consisting in various stages of history along streets.

Handsome traditional three-story wooden buildings with ornate filigree windows on the upper levels, once residences, now hopelessly converted into commercial spaces, continued to maintain their long established elegance despite crowding on all sides by newer buildings, pockmark disarity out of concrete within the last decade.

It was easy at least two layers of Kathmandu lifestyle existing tenuously side by side. Most importantly, it was seeing the walking on the road, knowing in the early days which unobstructed later would eventually give way to progress.

What would take quite awhile, or maybe never give way to progress, was the amazing web of narrow lanes that few out, bring the pulse from the center of Kathmandu out to its main streets.

Unexpectedly, off these wide, people slowly narrowed out of their homes into the deep shade of narrow, three-pond streets bordered in by two- and three-story buildings.

Children played, men sipped cups of tea, people bought snacks from ambulant sellers. Everybody went to see what was available from the basket of produce vendors set up on the pavement, and bargained for fresh vegetables to cook for that night's dinner.

By late afternoon, the entire neighborhood was out on the street. Everyone knew each other, each had something to say to the other. So interesting to observe. My camera and I were tremendously welcome.

At irregular intervals, the network of narrow lanes opened out into little squares, some no larger than wide intersections where sometimes a small Hindu shrine, strewn with yellow flowers, stood against the blank brick wall of a house. The largest squares' temples were always filled with devotees filling to and fro.

Rare alternative

The largest square of all is Kathmandu Durbar (royal) Square, the ceremonial center of the city where kings of Nepal once were crowned and legitimized. The original Royal Palace, residence of whatever holder it stood north to Narayanhiti about a century ago, still stands.

Planking three loosely linked squares, the series of traditional brick-and-wood and Western-style civic buildings and temples that make up Durbar Square mostly date from the 17th and 18th centuries. But the principal draw of the square is that the locals go there to watch the world go by, often socialize and do other typical activities that make Durbar Square a special event.

Most special was spending an afternoon an hour in quiet Kathmandu, without being harassed by hustlers looking for customers, and the smell of motorbikes on narrow lanes. Being able to navigate the city in comfort, spurs up the discovery that beneath the surface of modern Kathmandu lies a layer of lost urban elegance, surrounded by traditional urban practices, and a comfortable leisurely.

All of that has now vanished with the current state of disarray of the Nepalese government, a state of disarray evident in the present lifestyle of the people.

Kathmandu remained in normal the next day. Totally gone was the peace I felt the day before.

E-mail: pritikpant@gmail.com for comments.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Jaggesh L Vilvalou

WITHOUT the usual jockeying for street space by pedestrians, rickshaws and motorbikes, traditional Newari houses in narrow Kathmandu lanes stand out.

HUGE draw work, people gather in a small open square in outskirts of central Kathmandu for tea and chop.

WATCHING the world go by from the platform of the Maju Deval Temple at Kathmandu's Durbar Square

New CCP Thirteen Artists showcase art 'that's always new'

Home page C1

THE 2009 CCP Thirteen Artists awardees are (standing from left) Boots Caballeroan, Dex Bonreal Dalmacio, Ben Saludagha, Kawayan de Guia, Iggy Rodriguez, Raya Martin, MM Yu, Winner Jamaloc (seated from left) Raquel de Leyola, Christina Dy, Jayjee Samson and Pamela Yao Santos. (not in photo) is Patty Bautaguna

tion to join a "war" against any system that makes human life too complicated.

In his second are visual allusions that range from abstract urbe scenes. In his case, growing Sangi to ruined concentrate to painting resources with and underscoring street dos in his installations. All this, when Ali Boto wants is "to just talk about life, not art."

For the CCP exhibit, he will have a cohesive in his usual installation. He promises to consult a reticular list so as to address the health concerns of both the cultural and the audiences.

"Arbor," a performance artist Raquel de Leyola's semantic frontier like work portrays Bikbayan, multi-faceted Bagobo goddess. She is covered in cubic, her many nipples spraying white milk-like blood.

"Parental" draws her to create "a more concrete output of sentiments and ideas." She "primarily addresses issues on women, colonialism, censorship, conservatism, migration, displacement, identity and globalization in the face of contemporary."

Christina Dy, who identifies herself as "the one who drives," cut the wall after gallery wall with freehand drawings. She has filled a 90-ft long exhibit area with no less than 500 drawings. Aptly her second for her art is "obsessive."

Iggy Rodriguez calls his works "textile," whether he paints, draws or sculpts. His off-kilter and anomic are recurrences in his being a "half-time cultural architect."

He says that "his studio is subservient the "struggle to serve the people" rather than the anarchists his imagery as "things often seen but remain unnoticed."

Ben Saludagha is into documentation and puppetry. He adds that history and its making greatly influence him. He is fond of juxtaposing past and present to what he calls "visual discourse"—whether supportive, moving forward or backward, but always in the Filipino context.

He has a preference for shadow puppets, which he admits is not a traditional art-form in the Philippines, but which he admits exactly he in absence of set standards, unlike that of the Indonesian tapestry Asli or the Chinese puppet show.

Boots Caballeroan says her works can be described as "bizarre," both figurative and surreal. Thus, she admits, people are ranking her Bonglilo (round-faced school teen) and her mothers some together to many gentlemen that make up the character of her compositions.

"These items of meaning, when combined, enrich and expand the substance of this image created," she explains.

MM Yu's operative word is "chance," and rightly so, as her works are conventional on photography and abstract art. Her lens always chance upon the ordinary image or her point. Jaqui Idolchas in the most fortuitous manner.

Her work garners the cover of "Playing with Fire: Stories from the Pacific Rim," a publication of Oxford University Press.

Critic Jaqui Samson simply "paints," and perhaps prefers that his pieces be simply viewed.

Raya Martin was at the Cannes film festival during this interview. He is, of course, one of today's most exciting Filipino filmmakers.

Also not present to the interview were Pilmer Jamaloc and Kawayan de Guia. But word is that the latter continues make for the exhibit as stated. Latter that would include a joke box, a development that should further whet the appetite of art lovers.

The 2009 exhibit was planned by Flores and it was then that she introduced a mode of collaboration between curator and artists. In a model which Mae Tuazon, that year's curator, follows.

Simply put, the model tries to fit the artist's work with the exhibit space. Overall, perhaps, the exhibit will showcase a "more mainstream" group of artists," which, according to Flores, was Quiboy's prime criterion in the choice of the Thirteen Artists.

The Thirteen Artists awards will be formally announced July 9, during which the exhibit of the new recipients will be unveiled at the CCP Main Gallery. Each awardee will receive a trophy designed by Louie Cordero.

E-mail the author at majordaisy@gmail.com.

Montelibano at Duemila

Visual artist and filmmaker Manny Montelibano unveils a one-man show at Galleria Duemila, Pasay City. The exhibit titled "Synaesthesia" consists of a series of multimedia installations that explore the bittersweet experience of the Philippine diaspora. Utilizing nonsense images and mundane objects such as landline telephone handsets, Montelibano defies deeper into the mechanic recollections of this phenomenon. Call 831-9999/ 832-9999 loc. 2, visit duemilaillustrators.net. The gallery is located at 2/F Luring St., Pasay City.

"LIFELINE," by Manny Montelibano

'Abstrax' at Metro

Award-winning artists Salvador Ching, Buds Contreras, Ike Antenil Bautidoro, Jam Pleyao and Anar Saburnidan have banded together to reveal "Abstrax," which focuses on the abstract genre. The exhibit opens July 10, 6 p.m., at Metro Gallery, San Juan.

'Folk Lore' by Vinkuan

Paolo Vallarao's "Folk Love" is ongoing until July 31 at the Bonn Compound, 200 Bonn Blvd., Mandaluyong City. The artist's works feature workers in suits, dogs with Minnesota heads, exotic dancers, rockets, Louis XIV dogs with Iranian faces and the Mona Lisa doubling as performance stages as the birdcage of characters. Call 7526553/ 0920-9219008. E-mail info@bbaa.ph.

Rodriguez at One Workshop

Multimedia artist Dr. Rafael Rodriguez mounts his second solo exhibition titled "Metaphre."

PHOTO SHOW ON BAGUIO

The "Timeless Baguio at 95 Mts. Yours Devotedly photo contest launched by Victory Liner, in partnership with YIG, Color Fujifilm and Manila Bulletin, capped off by successful run with an exhibit at its Baguio terminal. The photo exhibit showcased certain representations of the beauty and splendor of the City of Pines. Winning entries include Fernando Capati Jr.'s "Foggy Baguio" (first prize), Roger Tingle's "My Hometown" (second prize), Lino Almendral's "Victory Terminal" (third prize) and Edwards Quimso' "Victory's Eye, Welcome to Baguio" (special prize). Apart from the winning entries, also on display are the 100 finalists. The exhibit will be brought to other Victory terminals in northern Luzon.

MLhuillier signs with Jollibee for "padala" deal

The Jollibee Division Heads of M. Lhuillier Philippines (Standing), (from L - R) Mrs. Cecilia Lumagui Manager of Money Transfer Division, Mr. Arnold Del Rosario General Manager Visayas, Mr. Michael Lhuillier VP of M. Lhuillier, Mr. Jun Soliva Regional Key Account Manager of Jollibee, Ms. Rhea Mendoza Relationship Account Officer of Jollibee

VISUAL ARTS

A STREET in Paris

De Leon, D'Bayan at Crucible

Joey de Leon and Igsal D'Bayan present a back-to-back exhibit at The Crucible Gallery, 6/F SM Megamall A, Mandaluyong City. Joey presents doors and multi-paintings in acrylic, using canvas chips as a medium for abstract and "accidental beauty," while Igsal presents portraits of women in watercolors. The delicately and dark-comedy of historical events, as well as of history itself. "Joey de Leon's Doh & Chips + Igsal D'Bayan's Fancy Stained" is on view until July 12. Call Chet Eduarte at 584-8000 ext 6100001.

ARTWORKS of Joey de Leon and Igsal D' Bayan

THE GRAMMY-nated Grammy Woods, whose fans for Philippine airspace has driven him to create reproductions as that others may partake of their fondness of history and culture.

Ernil Napa exhibit

Ernil Napa mans and manages a three-storey business called Century Woods, and his hand-in-hand at Batangas Bay, Olongapo, Donsol, after tables, 1 fifth century commode are touch weight, after and highly-prized by others. Napa reproduces antique by using wood. His new collection of furniture is on exhibit at the 2/F of B. Torres Mall, along Bokaki Ave., Mabolo City. Call Fe Napa at 09190010312. Visit their Boutique showroom at Cebu Soledad Ext., Brgy. Cine Bonzo, Pardo, Cebu City. Call 7266669 and 7262162.

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ANTHONY: Reylan Francisco, businessman; Lydia T. Cesario, deputy general manager for operations, Philippine Tourism Authority; Department of Tourism Undersecretary Oscar T. Palabyab, Tourism Services and Regional Offices; architect Reynaldo G. Francisco, artist; Eugenio D. Agonoy, former publisher of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Mr. & Ms. Magazine; and former congressman Salvador "Sonny" H. Escudero III

"FIRST Man and Woman"

Colors of Sorsogon light up a late bloomer's late art

At 81, architect Reynaldo Francisco holds his first solo art show

By Dexter R. Matilo
Contributor

AS ARCHITECT REYNALDO FRANCISCO made his way to the podium to deliver his speech, he did so with deliberateness. He was the same way when he addressed the crowd, pausing every moment that between his statement to look at the faces of those present as if to signify their importance.

Those actions belie the youthful enthusiasm of a man who has had triple heart bypass in 2001 and a sudden diabetic leg amputation in 2007. But Francisco has found renewal from shaking his infirmities.

"Colors of Sorsogon," which recently opened at the GSIS Museum, is Francisco's first one-man art exhibit.

The artworks include genre paintings of Filipino barrio scenes, as well as other more adventurous topics such as the origin of man and even how a man can transform to a woman with the help of makeup.

"I have to reinvent myself into a visual artist," Francisco said. "For some time, I was a creative person who, in all his life, did so little to nourish it. It never occurred to me to draw my works, but when I noticed I was running out of wall space to hang them, I changed my mind."

"THE FLORES Family"

THE ARTIST and his wife, Rosa M. Francisco

Eldest son

Francisco, at 81, is the eldest son of a government construction foreman who died during the Japanese Occupation. He spent his boyhood in Sorsogon, where he made the sea, the mountains and the streets into his playground. It is no surprise, therefore, that most of his works invoke Sorsogon and Bicol, the land of whale sharks.

The childhood playground of the multi-awarded artist, the son and namesake of his hometown, became the main subjects of his art. Not to mention, of course, the cultures and traditions of Sorsogon and that of Filipinos in general, such as the subtlety or cockfighting. This self-professed late bloomer hopes to inspire others to find greater fulfillment in life despite their late years or failures.

After graduating from a public high school, Francisco took up Architecture at University of Santo Tomas, then transferred to Manuel Luis Quezon University where he became its first graduate in the course. A few years later, he finished his MBA at University of the Philippines.

In his speech, Francisco asked: "Why do flowers choose the sunset time to bloom? Why do butterflies choose this time to transform from a worm to flower?"

Perhaps the questions have lingered on his mind his entire life. But whether he already has the answer is then questions or still has to find them, it is quite obvious that at his age, Francisco's colorful journey is just about to begin.

For inquiries on Francisco's paintings, e-mail the artist at rgfrancisco28@yahoo.com.

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Manilart 09 features 500 works from Southeast Asia

Over 40 galleries from Manila and the region hold an art fiesta

By Cleofer G. Marilla
Contributor

PHILIPPINE CONTEMPORARY artists have recently given the country its much deserved buzz on the international art scene. Filipino artists have have made names for themselves and their works command respectable prices at auctions abroad.

So it comes as a surprise that compared to nearby Hong Kong, Taipei, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, the Philippines has no international art fair of its own. That is about to change, however, when Manilart 09 takes place on July 16-19, at the SMC Tent, Residencia Global City, Taguig.

This historical art fair will be participated in by no less than 40 of the country's leading galleries, all expected to showcase the best of their artists and realtreasure. Galleries from around the Southeast Asian region are also expected to join.

Over 500 artworks—paint-

MANILART 09 »

"TIGHTROPE—The Reality Show," by Edwin Tresfiguera

"AH ORDINARY Sunday," by Dominique Balois

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A LIFTA BY JESS ABARA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH. GARCIA

DICK TRACY

LOVEBIRDS BY ELIZABETH CHECHELO

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PARLEWO

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TUADA BY HAIRA COLL

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

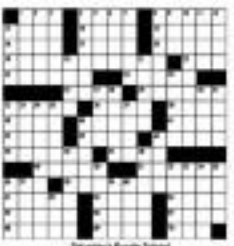
KYDING AND WOODY BY LYRA GARCIA-LAHIG

BIKO-PACHINE BY HIRO GARCIA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKO

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

3			6	1		8		
		9		4	7			
	4					5		1
2			1				4	
8	9						6	5
	6				2			8
5		7					3	
			7	5		9		
		3		8	6			7

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKO

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	2	1	7	5	6	8	4	9
4	7	5	9	1	8	3	2	6
6	8	9	4	2	3	7	5	1
8	5	4	2	9	1	6	3	7
1	3	2	6	8	7	4	9	5
9	6	7	5	3	4	1	8	2
2	1	6	3	4	9	5	7	8
5	4	8	1	7	2	9	6	3
7	9	3	8	6	5	2	1	4

Audie Sison is the 'Armani of teddy-bear artists'

By Margie C. Benigno
Contributor

WHEN HE WAS A BOY, AUDIE Sison had a teddy bear that was kept by his mother only for display. He promised to bigpond play with the soft toy, but that desire was never fulfilled.

Years later, that unquenched childhood longing transformed into a creative endeavor, which has made Sison a star in the world of teddy-bear artists.

Coming from a class of dentists, Audie finished Pre-Dental Medicine (BS Zoology) at Far Eastern University. But a career in medicine was far from his calling. He studied up on writing in marketing and promotions at the Philippine Connections & Visitors Corporation.

Sison was promoted to senior communications officer and also performed as a dancer in the Sicat's folk-dance group. In 1986, he left for Madrid to study Spanish Philology, which covers language, literature and culture. He also started shuffling to the Netherlands, the homeland of his longtime partner.

In 1991, Sison started accumulating dolls and teddy bears when it became a trend. After three years of collecting, it dawned on him that he could also produce teddy bears.

"The pay top dollar when you could get one that looks like an original? But I could not see a bottom on my chest, let alone a bear," he says. "Picking up a needle and some mohair, I looked at my collection and said, 'I can do it!'"

He started with commercial patterns purchased at teddy-bear shows and hobby shops. After few years, he was dissatisfied with the teddy bear's body. With his background in visual arts from Madrid's art school, he revised his own designs, inspired by the teddy bears of the 1900s.

Classic version

Teddy bears were created by a German seamstress, Margaret Steiff. The classic teddy bear is characterized by glassy eyes, a stitched snout, a hump back, long arms with spoon-shaped paws, and small rudder with long feet.

The Steiff toys were made of mohair, felt, alpaca or woven plush, stitched by hand and filled with polyester and metal shavings.

Sison says his teddy bears are so traditional as the Steiff toys. "All my bears have that nostalgic, elegant and retro look."

For materials, he favors German mohair for the body, wood wool and poly fill for the stuffing, wool felt for the paw pads, and glass and antique shoe buttons for the eyes. The secret of his vintage look is his "sensible sculpting," which he compares to the meticulous tailoring of the 1800s.

He has created a reputation as an elegant bears. The Lords of Trots, which sports a coat with a collar-veil resonance of European ladies, has been on the cover of international teddy-bear magazines.

His favorite work is the collector bear with sleep-set eyes, as has been the most photographed. Medieval plates mohair covered the ear. Inverted like muzzle and embroidered it to enhance the bear's timeworn look.

Sison made a breakthrough on the international scene when he joined the Japan Teddy Bear Association and Convention. He came with 22 hand-stitched bears and left Japan with order from buyers.

His reputation quickly spread among teddy bears collectors. He also did tours in San Diego, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Berlin, and Australia.

Sometimes he would get letters from strangers who would reserve a bear. "By the time I get into my hotel room, the phone would be ringing. I'll ask the caller, 'How did you know?' 'I've been checking the hotels.'"

That's how in demand he is. For 10 years, Sison signed autographs at My Friends & Me, named as the best teddy-bear shop in the States, in Leesburg, Virginia. The shop is famous for collectibles produced by the best teddy-bear artists in the world.

Sison is a two-time winner of the Teddy Bear Artist of the Year, the Oscars of the industry, given by Ele Teddy Bear and Friends magazine.

He is also a recipient of a Golden Teddy award. For a bear that evoked a 1900s look, Sison became the only recipient of the Winners' Circle award, selected by past winners.

Master bear-maker

His works have landed on covers of major teddy-bear publications. He was even dubbed by magazines as "master bear-maker" and the "Armani of teddy-bear artists" for his magnificent exquisite workmanship. The ornamental use of accessories elaborate, and uniqueness, the bears.

Sison is quite aware that the price of his teddy bears, but bears that they look at least $800. A miniature, standing at four inches, starts at $98. He says he's the only artist in teddy bear who is allowed not to put a price tag on his works.

"In fact, people say 'I love your bear so much but I have to mortgage my house.' Or, 'I have to save my salary for four months,'" he says. "Especially how a teddy bears made out of synthetic. What we do as artists is not a cup but a art."

Sison is able to capitalize on his skills in marketing and promotions. Last year, he was the marketing director for the Philippine Pavilion at the Zaragoza Expo to Spain. Japanese and Korean companies have trained him to be the interior/visual representative and coordinator for their teddy bear shows.

He invites teddy-bear artists to attend. In exchange, he is given a commission, perks and a rent-free booth in the fairs.

"Collecting and making teddy bears is passion for me. I never thought of it as a business. If I sell, fine; if not, I don't care. I want to make something I can be proud of," he says.

Audie Sison's teddy bears are available at 440 EE, Greenhills E-mail 756-2384.

SHAGGINESS bear rocks like 100-century bears.

GERMAN mohair for the body, wood wool and poly fill for the stuffing

ANTIQUE-LOOKING teddy bears of vintage mohair, glass and antique shoe buttons.

He received the Golden Teddy and other international awards–and the bears sell for hundreds of dollars

AUDIE Sison and his teddy bear

Manilart 09 features . . .

From page B1

ings and sculptures—will be on display under one roof for the first time. This event should give art lust art collectors but lesser of us in general a chance to gather talk and purchase art while enjoying live art performances, on-the-spot painting competitions, art auctions, charity fund-raisers.

"This will be our public and corporate," says project director Jonathan Ay. "It's a good thing the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, through its Committee on Exhibits headed by Leo Yan, initiated this project and approved its funding, because this international art fair is just what we need to make ourselves and showcase to the whole world how advanced we are in terms of the visual arts."

"Manilart 09 is a fine opportunity to let Filipinos feel proud of their countrymen's creativity while at the same time invite our friends from other countries to appreciate as before or a people through our art."

Participating galleries include 1:1 Gallery Antonio, Art Circle, Art Informal, Ay-Tolits, Arte Orientes, Blanc Art Space, Boston Gallery, City Gallery, Clarion Encounters, 1 Galeria, Finale Art File, Galeria Ar-

"SILIMOL," by PJ Literatus

tes, Galeria Francesca, Galeria Joaquin, Galeria Stephanie, Galeria V, Gallery 168, Gallery Genesis, Gallery Nine, Ilaida Gallery, Kubo-Sining, Lucia Gallery, Manila Contemporary, Gallery Montrade Gallery, Masterpiece Gallery, Met-in Gallery, Ay-Bi Art Gallery, Mirador, Pinoy Art Gallery, Thames Gallery, Quadrilateral, Renaissance Art, Reyes-Pamaos Galleries, Silverstone Encounters, The Artroom, The Artroom, Village Art Gallery and White-Cube@Galleria.

The Preview Night on July 15, which is by invitation only, will bring together the Who's Who in the Philippine art scene. It will also serve as the stage for the launching of Contemporary Art Philippines Magazine.

Guests of honor will include Tourism Secretary Ace Durano, Health Secretary Francisco Duque, Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga, Makati Rep. Mercedes Abigail Binay, Taguig Rep. Ma. Laarni Cayetano and Supreme Court Justice Presbitero Velasco.

Performers for the night include Gino Bolipata, Brian Escalante and Ed Cudjoh B. Bool will be emceed by chef Rolando Laudico.

Manilart 09 will open its doors to the public the following day at 11 a.m.

Admission ticket is at P300. Students and senior citizens with valid IDs can get 20 percent discount.

Activities include Manilart Auction (organized by 9th Batch of Finale Art File), "Looking for Juan in Art and Paternal" (a mini-concert featuring Pinpoklos and Lo-que), an art raffle by Jolina Robbins of Canvas and Lost Gallery's and "Oriental Orchids" (a Chinese painting demonstration by art teacher Hwa Chai).

An art fair catalogue, published by Contemporary Art Philippines magazine, will also be made available. It contains all relevant issues concerning Philippine art today as well as features on important museums and cultural societies and also serves as a visual guidebook of Philippine art galleries.

Manilart 09 is a coordinated effort of the BCCA and the Brandside Art Galleries Organization (Bago), an association of privately owned galleries.

Call 2710470 or 0917-8513333 or visit www.manilart.com

"LOL," by Farley del Rosario

South African storytelling, kiddie concert at CCP

SOUTH African author Quiva Mhlophe-Berker tells the "Hacuwindaba"

A SOUTH AFRICAN children's story titled "Mazwandaba" will be told by Gcina Mhlophe-Berker on July 8-9 (10 a.m.) and July 10, (5 p.m. and 8 p.m.) at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Tanghalang Huseng Batute (Studio Theater).

The event is presented by the Embassy of South Africa in cooperation with the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

"Mazwandaba" is about a woman who lived in a beautiful house by the sea with her husband and children. But something was missing from their life. There were no stories at that time.

Mapwandaba were not very far from and plans nearby to ask the animals if they know some stories. Eagle told her Elephant could take her to the underwater kingdom where the Spirit King and Queen lived with the Spirit People, and where she could find the stories she was searching for.

This book was chosen as one of the Friendly South Africa 100 Representative Children's Books of Africa at the 29th Bilby Award Congress in 2004. It is ideal for the 5-9 year-old age group.

Born in 1955, Mhlophe is a well-known South African storyteller, poet, playwright, director and author. Storytelling is a deeply traditional activity in Africa and Mhlope is one of the few women storytellers in a country dominated by males.

She does her most important work through charismatic performances, working to preserve storytelling in a context of keeping literacy alive and encouraging South African children to read. She tells her stories in four of South Africa's languages: English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa.

Meanwhile, CCP invites youngsters (ages 10-13 years old) to the Young People's Concert titled "The Adventures of Juliet and Ivan" by the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Agrippino "Nonoy" Diaz on, on July 9, at the Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (CCP Theater), 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

The program includes Leroy Ian Peder's "Mga Kwentong Awtsin" and Rossini's "William Tell."

As part of the Concert Arts for the People Program, the concert is patterned after Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, which aims not only to stimulate children's creativity, but also to develop their understanding of symphonic music in a concert setting.

The youngsters will also have the chance to acquaint themselves with the four major families of instruments. Certain musical scores will also be explained during the concert. The PPO is scheduled to have scenarios/ideas in various popular media and villages around Manila starting September this year.

Ticket Prices are at P200 for students and P400 for non-students.

Call the CCP Box Office at 8321704, CCP Performing Arts Department at 8321125 locals 1606 and 1607; CCP Marketing Department at 8321125 loc. 1800-1806, and PPO Office at 8321125 locals 1606 and 1616.

Relive the magic of Harry Potter

HOGS HARRY POTTER'S FIRST curtain-bid ceremony to let life-and-death battle with the Dark Lord, we have been with the boy named every step of the way. Now, get the chance to relive his three semesters in the Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (with paper format at Bookend Book Store). Get 20-percent off when you reserve your copy on or before July 5. Books must be claimed on July 7-15, to avail of the offer. No down payment required. Reserve online by downloading the form at www.bookendbooks.com.

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Showcase of 'abel' Iloco

THE ABEL ILOCO WAS RECENTLY SHOWcased in West Philippines' Best of Region I trade fair held at the Clarendell Pavilion in Intramuros. The event was organized by the Kamaro'ban Foundation.

Ilocos Norte Gov. Michael Keon, who wore a finely Ilocano barong, led the models composed of lawyer Ramon Alfonso of Dingras, former Kamaro'ban president Georgie Balmonde (first of Sarrat, current Kamaro'ban president Lito Blanco Roque, Chito Garcia-Gonzales, past Soroptimist International president Leodelle Villarica, town officials and members of the Sanggumong Pandaraigan of Ilocos Norte.

The town of Pasuquin is trying to revive the weaving industry. Proof is Keon's to have produced a great number of hand-loom textiles during the launch's era. The fabrics has come a long way from the traditional somber colors of black and white, gray and blue to the new vibrant green, lemon yellow and vermillion red.

Abel Iloco reminds us of blankets, towels and bedsheets, now it has metamorphosed into a fabric of elegance and comfort.

The fashion show featured clothes for women which range from the casual to the elaborate formals with ruffled shawls and beaded bodice. For the men, there were smart casuals, chic barongs and jackets. And there were soft fabrics for children's dresses, too.

The Kamaro'ban Foundation says to it that Ilocano arts and culture and the abel Iloco are preserved. Incorporated in 1995, its first president was the late Francis Alfelor, president of Cotton Philippines. During the term of Gov. Alfelor as president, the coffeetable book "Il, nga Nawadi" was published.

The present board of trustees is composed of Lita Manero Bugay, Rosario D. Tuazo, Sen. Sen B. Dilat, lawyer Ricardo Alfonso, Dr. Pedro Labrador, lawyer Roger Arguillo, Leonardo J. Agcaoili, Cirilito Valdez Lejano, Mary Lou Caspio Claudio, Agnes Cortez, Evelyn Dulawong, Edith Sulabao, lawyer Jose Victor Llanera and Betty F. Morel.

The abel Iloco fashion show of Ilocos will be brought to Pais through arrangements by Liz Reyes Crapis, chair of the Municipal Tourism Council of Pasay.

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ENTERTAINMENT

IN THIS ISSUE
- Erik Santos sings Jim Brickman /E4
- Wrestling star talks about his game /E2

It's his way to help the 'sinking industry'

Goma waives fee for digital movie

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ACTOR RICHARD GOMEZ makes his first full-length digital movie in Mel Chionglo's "Boses," the sixth and last of...

...being from the Sine Direk series.

Gomez, as the actor is known to those his circles, says it was the screenplay by Ricky Lee that instilled the difference for him.

In the political thriller, Gomez plays a councilor...

MORE, E4

Dream wedding

By Nestor R. Cruz

ANNE

ACTRESS ANNE CURTIS [illegible] rumors of [illegible] involving [illegible]—and ex-fiancé—will [illegible] very [illegible] that she used to hang out with the actor.

"This happened way before I started dating Luis [illegible]," the actress said during the press launch of her latest TV series, "The Wedding," on the Ka-

MORE, E4

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DUAL AIRBAGS
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ALL POWER AMENITIES
KEYLESS ENTRY
FOG LAMPS
E10-READY

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DUAL AIRBAGS
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'George and Cecil' is a viewer-pleaser

RYAN Agoncillo and Judy Ann Santos play wife, husband and wife.

QUITE A NUMBER OF RYAN TV SHOWS have been launched this month, bolstering the ever-increasing popularity of the bayani. Topping the list is the Judy Ann Santos-Ryan Agoncillo sitcom, "George and Cecil," which is clicking with viewers due to its "role-reversal" twist. Judy Ann plays a no-nonsense cop, while Ryan is cast as a mild-mannered teacher.

Despite their unconventional pairing, the guy still wears the pants in this household, and there's no doubt that they love each other to bits. So, what's their problem? Their respective families simply can't get along, and their endless game of one-upmanship periodically threatens to wreck the couple's otherwise happy union.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

So Pinoy

That's "so Pinoy," of course, and in the hands of writer-director Joey Reyes, the two families' "given, poison" can be depended on for some humorous broadsides.

The last time we looked in on the show, the big to-do was over George's upcoming birthday which was being organized by the bigger celebration for Cecil's mom. Naturally, George's parents were appalled. Why should their beloved daughter (such pristine pure as her mother in-law can splurge on her own bash, with Cecil footing half of the bill? Why indeed.

Judy Ann and Ryan's believable and considerable portrayals add to the show's likability. Since their characters love each other, they don't want to be unsentimental and nagging, the joanne for sitcom acting in these parts, and that's such a relief.

On the other side, the sitcom sometimes feels "overpopulated," with some regular characters doing little to rationalize their presence in it.

Cecil's co-driver pissed flat, let's hope that, sooner rather than later, it resolves more often on genuine issues, rather than the usual "family-feud" stuff. Time, after all, is in unique edge over the competition.

For its part, "Sigaw Dalawa" is about to wrap up its action-drama story about feuding half-siblings. Just before the show peaks, it's evaluate its effectivity as a star-making vehicle for its young leads, Khar Chai, John Cuenca and Gerald Anderson.

All told, despite Kris's best efforts, we feel that the drama series has been too much of a drain for her. Since its two male leads are fighting for her character's ties, the need to deal with difficult character-romantic issues—but fails to adequately verify them.

In the simply too young and raw for the rigorous task? If so, her handlers can be faulted for not being as tact enough in their evaluation of her capabilities at this stage of her career.

Lorna's work in the sitcom is also deficient because it's too dramatically strenuous and sedulous, and done for effect. We, his character has a lot of demons to exorcise, but his portrayal's hitchhikers do little to clarify those issues.

Believable motivation

If the young actor really wants to do well, he should focus more on believable motivation rather than in-your-face emotional display.

All told, it's tenderness who benefits most from his exposure in "Sigaw Dalawa." As the story's most well-mannered half-sibling, his character initially has a hard time getting his dramatic engine going—but he eventually hurts better than Cuenca because his preparation runs deeper.

Also impressive was his charge of temperament later in the series, from doubtful cost to rebel. Even his physical transformation—slimmed and then some all to the good, because it revealed new facets to his character. It also hinted at a nascent versatility that he can put to purposeful use in the course of his career.

Wrestling star talks about his game

By Digo Ramos
Contributor

WHAT USED TO BE SIMPLY CALLED wrestling matches have become huge entertainment productions. Fireworks exploded as the protagonists entered. The crowd's eager gave an upgrade. And the attendees once still diamond-eyes super-sized.

John Hawkins is a wrestling superstar. Since his 2005 debut, Hawkins—John Hennigan real life—has won the Intercontinental Championship, Tag Team Championship and ECW Championship. His exceptional game makes even the most "hardcore fan forget that the match results are scripted. Some matches tend to become epic feats...or the pairs are better than the whole. Hawkins makes a match compelling to watch from start to finish.

The Batavian interviewed Hawkins for the upcoming World Wrestling Entertainment Smackdown and Extreme Championship Wrestling Live Tour on July 18 at the Araneta Coliseum. Excerpts:

Is there any particular wrestler you want to have a feud with?

It...I would love to take on C.M. Punk. I think his strange lifestyle and goofy tattoos are unique. Also, Chris Jericho. The biggest mouth in the WWE who just talks and talks but never actually does anything. I would love to wrestle with him.

How different is John Hawkins outside the ring?

John Hawkins is pretty much who I am outside the ring. I don't have to spell out people or express my point of view. But in sports entertainment, to communicate my emotions to a mass audience I need to be more than life so that people can feel what I feel.

How involved are wrestlers in developing their characters?

The best characters are the ones that we ourselves come up with. Jimmy Gold Dove-Austin came up with his own persona, so with The Rock, John Cena, Triple H, Randy Orton...names thereby and myself. When you're trying to act like something that you are not, it becomes boring. That is not interesting to fans.

What is your take on Donald Trump owning RAW storyline? Do you think this helps a wrestling show?

It adds notoriety and interest. It makes national headlines. And the fact that you asked me that question shows Donald Trump proves people are interested in it.

Has the WWE ever told you not to execute certain moves or protect yourself more?

There's an analogy in the United States, there is no line against riding a bike with no hands. You can ride your bike with no hands if you want to. But if you are not good enough to ride your bike with no hands and you try it, you are going to crash and hurt yourself.

Would you like to do movies?

I would love to do movies. I'm a huge movie buff. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite movie?

My favorite movie is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite book?

My favorite book is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite song?

My favorite song is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite food?

My favorite food is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite drink?

My favorite drink is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite color?

My favorite color is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite animal?

My favorite animal is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite sport?

My favorite sport is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite hobby?

My favorite hobby is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite quote?

My favorite quote is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite saying?

My favorite saying is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite phrase?

My favorite phrase is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite word?

My favorite word is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite number?

My favorite number is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite letter?

My favorite letter is "The Godfather." I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child. I've been a huge movie buff since I was a child.

What is your favorite shape?

My favorite shape

RICHARD Gomez in a scene from "Boxer"

Goma waives fee . . .

From page 61

Jun Cabuay) is chasing us him.

"Oh eh. Mel made us read the script," he recalls. "It was such a well-crafted movie that it would be a mistake to reduce it."

He explains that working gritty roles (like in Claire Beder's "Dahas" and Ishmael Bernal's "Wating") have yielded positive results for him in the past. "I prefer playing dark characters."

He insists that an indie movie is worlds away from a mainstream production.

"The working environment is totally different," he says. "You don't have the paraphernalia of a mainstream movie. The food, location and expenses are scaled down. But to working on a budget."

Goma himself ventured his talent for his film.

"I didn't charge anything," he notes. "I really wanted to experience doing an indie film and it's my way of helping the ailing movie industry. If we don't do anything, nothing will happen."

Goma, who's now preparing for his second run as host of GMA-7's "Family Feud," hopes to direct a digital movie someday.

"Considering our country's political climate, it will be significant to tell the story of two soldiers: One idealistic and another one corrupt."

"Boxer," which opens July 8, will face stiff competition from Hollywood blockbusters like "Transformers 2" and "Ice Age 3" box-office hits.

"It's difficult to come close to these giant productions," he owns up. "But on a positive note it will be the only Tagalog movie showing at the same time. Getting the spillovers crowd, the avid Filipino moviegoers, hope these movies should be sufficient for now. What is important is that 'Boxer' promises to give the audience their money's worth."

Goma got his late manager Douglas Quijano's blessing in going indie for the first time. (He starred in Peque Gallaga's "Bwaya Blonde" in 2005.)

"I told Dec (Gallaga) that I really wanted to do this film," he recounts.

He says that he and wife Lucy have yet to find a replacement for Quijano who died last month.

"Right Moves is now with Tito Mel (or Chot-Reyes). Eddie Reyes, with Ray Morales and Priscill Reanes, with Wynguel Tesoro," he admits. "But Joey Marquez, Antonio Aquitania, John Estrada and I haven't found a manager yet. We are just letting the days pass. Maybe after The Reign' stint (by the end of July), we'll start thinking about it."

Former "Pahiram Lolako" director Johnny Manahan was mentioned as possible manager for Goma.

"Hi M is a good choice. We hope that he could handle all of us who haven't found a manager yet — especially the newcomers like my Appointments, Ryan Yllana and Tyrone Perez ... So that we can request for them to be included in our projects as well."

E-mail: bjcastelo@gmail.com

Gabby wants to be 'father of the bride'

GABBY CONCEPCION IS CLUELESS about his movie with his daughter KC. "Everybody waits pang-showbiz at alam ang 'Chavit' ni Z," Gabs chuckles. "But if I ever move up siblings, soon it would be as a 'Father of the Bride'."

Why would he want to be KC's leading man? "**John Lloyd** ['Lloydster' to **Ruffa Gutierrez**]."

Why not **Piolo Pascual** since's said to be individly practicing KC? "They have a relationship na eh, give chance, naman sa Lloydie. Mahusay na bata. Naglalaro kami sa show in Europe."

In her study in to be a father of the bride in real life? "If and when KC wants to get married, that's her call."

For Gabby at for events, clubs and KC will stick together for good.

Fresh twist

Cesca Abellana is out to captivate viewers' hearts in "Rosalinda," which premieres tonight on GMA-7's Telebabad block. She will give a fresh twist to the character originally played by **Dimples**.

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

Doon't she feel pressured that it's too much to non? "I was surprised to be chosen to portray the lead role sa ganu'," she realizes. "I know there are others who are more deserving. It's sure that they will come too. They just have to work hard for it."

Isn't she wary that some may might be envious of her because they've been waiting for a big break and here she comes being launched to full stardom right away? "They have nothing to be insecure or envious about," she says. "I look up to all of them." Aldo Gaerlan is with Dimples a la Cinderella!

MJ marathon

Since I can't go to the wake of my favorite uncle, **Michael Jackson**, I do my own slightly boring ex-MJ video CD marathon nightly. My condolences I cursed late Michael.

Al-Al de los Alas cheered me up. "Gory ako diyan, pero ako sa make. Mag-prank ka at black veil at big shades, tapos ng grieving widow," she said in jest. "Magpapanggap ka sa chair ang namatay another ng Bird child at MJ fans unknown till now identity nya. Ah-ha!"

That totally cracked me up. Then at turned serious. "Gusto kasi ni **Rhea Hermosa** nang mag-concert si MJ dito. Kaya pinaghandaan niya nga kaso nagkasakit ang mga sponsor kaya unable with MJ eh di sana nagpalipad na with him. Buti pa si Kenya pic. It'll lang ako nagsuot kay akala nya, sayah pa nya si Jennifer Lo di nag-pik-du-zana siya with MJ."

The King of Pop can never really be gone. His theatrical hits will forever be No. 1!

Voice character

I find that voicing out of the characters in the MTV Philippines animation "Rak," which was created for their anti-bullying campaign, is a challenge.

Erik sings Brickman

By Marinell R. Cruz

SINGER ERIK SANTOS arrived recently from a weeklong trip to the United States where he recorded his latest album for Star Records. Award-winning composer and producer Ryan Buhlmann produced it, featuring his wife's ("Erik Santos: Jim Brickmans Songbook"). It's due for release this month.

Erik now joins the circle of Lea Salonga, Martin Nievera, Pops Fernandez, Gloria Enrile, Ariel Rivera and Agot Isidro — all of whom have previously collaborated with Buhlmann.

"I learned a lot from him, too," Erik says of Brickman. "He's very methodical and disciplined."

What brought about this collaboration?

When he (Jim Brickman) was looking manager's Erik is one of our multifunction artists. We wanted to come up with something new for him, something that would make him or even bigger artist.

Erik: This is not your typical CD. This comes with piano scores for each song.

Did Jim say anything about your voice and singing style?

He said he liked my range, tone. He also said there were many good singers but only a few know how to express the right emotion that their songs want to convey. He said I'm one of the few I was flattered.

Was he visited?

Not at all. He's a nice guy, but you really have to be sure about your tastes.

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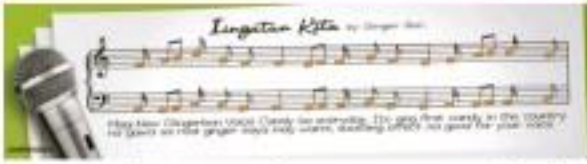

Freddie Aguilar's new baby

By Tony H. Maglalang
Contributor

FREDDIE AGUILAR HAS enough reasons to feel good these days. On Friday night, the 56-year-old singer-songwriter's latest business venture, the Freddie's Bar and Restaurant on Adriatico St. Malate (a stone's throw away from Robinsons Ermita), had its grand opening—after he personally supervised a six-month renovation of the original site.

The entertainment complex had actually opened without fanfare in February this year. Aguilar says that the nightly turnout of patrons, especially on weekends, has so far confirmed that he and his business partners made a good decision to set up shop in the heart of Manila's tourist district.

"I'm serious with this new venture. I want it to succeed in Malate," he tells the Inquirer.

"Given the financial and service pressures of starting a restaurant-related business, Aguilar's emerging disposition would otherwise seem out of place. His enterprise is merely at the pre-operating phase of a projected long haul in recouping a multi-million peso investment.

THE MENU'S opened for Freddie's Bar and Restaurant on Adriatico St. Malate, Manila

PHOTO BY JOAN BONDOC

THE FINDY folk music icon also performs live at the place on weekends

FREEDOM Aguilar puts up the flagship of his business interests

Hassles

He tells of the unending hassles of refurbishing an existing building to fit the new vision for his freedom's. The site was previously a videoke joint and its awkward structure provided enough challenge to him.

"When we first checked out the place, I had the feeling my co-investors underestimated double what the location. Multiple walls and cubicles took up available space. My partners probably didn't see its potential as an entertainment complex," Aguilar explains.

He adds: "I'm hardnight. I think we could have cut some costs if we just tore down the place and built a new one. We would have saved time and money spent removing and replacing the sewer and water piping network, for instance."

Lessons

But his co-investors, including Boots Padilla (Bobbi Padilla's elder half-sister), Gene Rambo and other family friends, kept their faith on the viability of the business, impressed the mesmerizing bankability of his name as a Pinoy folk music icon, Aguilar has been in the club and restaurant business for close to three decades. A lot of savvy and well-trained hands must have rubbed off on him over the years.

His first try was called Freddie Aguilar's Cheerpoint along Roxas Blvd. It was such a small venue that even on

PAGE F3

odyssey
MUSIC & VIDEO
3 Michael Jackson CDs in Top 10

THE PHILIPPINES' TOP DISK ALBUMS

For the week June 22-28, based on Odyssey Music & Video outlet chain's sales reports

Overall

1) "The Essential," Michael Jackson, Sony Music; 2) "Rare Yet Spicy," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 3) "Ultimate Collection," Celine Dion, Sony Music; 4) "We Are 1," Ryan Agoncillo & Erika Jansen, Star Records; 5) "Thriller (25th Anniversary)," Michael Jackson, Sony Music; 6) "Gling Gling," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 7) "Love Story by Piolo," Piolo Pascual, Viva Records, MCA Music; 8) "Closer," Michael Jackson, MCA Music; 9) "Priceless," Taylor Swift, MCA Music; 10) "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen Soundtrack," Various Artists, Warner Music

OPM

1) "Rare Yet Spicy," Willie Revillame, Star

Kapuso network treats Cebu fans

GMA 7 says thanks to island-province

By Raquel Sue Diego Jr.

CEBU CITY—GMA 7 EXpressed gratitude to this island-province with a grand fans' day held at the SM City Tarzle Hall on Saturday.

Top executives, led by Felipe L. Gozon (chair, president and chief executive officer) and Inigo E. Sidayen (senior vice president, corporate services group), and network personalities greeted Cebuanos with a day of singing, dancing, games and raffle surprises.

The Kapuso channel released 5,000 tickets and the hall was packed with fans as we got to catch a glimpse of stars like Dingdong Dantes, Dennis Trillo, Jennylyn Mercado, Heidi Somosa, Yasmien Kurdi, Jessica Garcia and Mark Herras, along with comedienne Candida and Bella Flor.

Gozon Mateo, a Kapuso Gerry to fans, re-hosted the day-long event, but he flew back to Manila that same afternoon, for a taping of his late-night show "Master Showman Walang Tulugan."

There were also different booths in the hall that offered games, free haircut and a photo session with stars like the "Kilik Ito "K" fashion Tribo and Garcia and the "Sanyerna" girls Mercado, Kunli and Samantha.

The networks' anchors and reporters like Mike Enriquez, Jessica Soho, Vicky Morales, Arnold Clavio, Pia Arcangel, Susan Enriquez, Iwan Mayeina and Mel Tiangco also graced the occasion.

Enriquez explained: "Our Kapuso Cebuanos are important to us."

Enriquez, as executive vice president of GMA Kapuso Foundation, assisted in Cebu a day earlier, to spearhead the distribution of school supplies to 13 campuses in the province.

Cindy Gozon-Valdes said the occasion is to announce the network's latest promotional campaign for Cebu.

Dubbed "Kapuso Cebuano Ng Tunay Milyonaryo," the promo offers more than P1 million worth of cash prizes.

"In the grand draw, there will be 20 winners of P10,000 each and one winner of P1 million, one lucky viewer in Cebu."

The campaign will run from July 13 to Sept. 11, 2009.

The most awaited treat came much later in the day, though.

It is no overstatement to say singing champs like Jonalyn Viray, Aiza Seguerra, Sharon Garcia, Gian Magdangal, Rhap Salazar, Bryan Termulo and Jen Rosendo to belt out hits.

But the usually serious "Idol" news anchor Chris Cayabyab rose to the occasion with his rendition of "Hiß" by the rock band The Spoiler.

Now that's gratitude.

E-mail: bgcolumn@yahoo.com

SINGING—Kapuso divas Yasmien Kurdi, Gian Magdangal, Jan Nieto and Rhap Salazar

Freddie Aguilar's . . .

From page F1

SRO weekends, gross earnings could only pay for the staff's salaries and operating expenses.

In the early '90s, he rebounded with the 500-seater Ka Freddie's in Tagaytay. It catered to a captive market and the capacity crowd on Fridays and Saturdays was enough to cover a week's expenses plus a little extra for investments.

But five years later he had to close it down because he couldn't afford the increase in leasing fees. The decision came at an unfortunate time, just when he felt that the place was about to start making money for his investors.

Aguilar later ventured into franchising the Ka Freddie's music bar and restaurant concept in Antipolo and Baguio. Unfortunately, these were short-lived engagements. He claims the franchisees failed to fulfill contracts.

He recently inked another Ka Freddie franchise in Boracay, Cavite, a few weeks before work on the Manila branch got going.

Right now, Ka Freddie's Makati is the flagship franchise. Its main attraction, a 46-seater cafe, balances live music and serves food nightly. Smaller function rooms named Isabela and Vigan are for family gatherings, birthday parties, seminars, and special occasions.

The Fabroas Garden is open 24/7 with affordable meals starting from P100 a plate. It offers the return of classic '60s-'80s morning love for food source and party night owls.

A new addition to the Ka Freddie's entertainment concept is a boutique where Aguilar's personal designs and those of his five grown-up children are on display. He designs his own jeans while two of his daughters' staff their own clothes and accessories. Customers can view these designs and probably have one custom-made to their taste.

The second task to fun and climax a day at Ka Freddie's Makati is a visit of the old and the new. Aguilar himself performs with the Whatever Band on the main stage at 9 o'clock, and on Fridays and Saturdays starting July 18.

On weekdays, the musical treats come from his rapper son Jessie, upcoming indies Jim Bamrick Trott, and a slew of solo performers from Blue Moon to B.O. Jones. The first Aguilar offspring to follow his footsteps, Morgan, sings jazz and the blues with bandmate Barcelon.

Also on Saturdays, patrons are encouraged to participate in the performances by sending in their personal stories, which Aguilar and the band will set to music. The idea was said to be a hit at Ka Freddie's Tagaytay and its resurrection at Makati is highly anticipated.

Aguilar currently calls himself a "free lord" on matters of the heart and relationships. "I've been through three marriages that didn't work out," he confesses. "I don't think it'd be fair now for me to enter into a new relationship now. Here, there is someone the business gets my full attention."

3 Michael Jackson CDs . . .

From page F1

Records; 2) "My Inspiration," Charles Mac Records; 3) "We Are 1," Ryan Agustin & Bailey James, Star Records; 4) "Killing Gilling," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 5) "Changing Lives," Zyn Zen Dedila, PolyEast Records; 6) "Addicted To Acoustic," Princess, Moy Music; 7) "For You," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 8) "Image Undocumented 2," Jed Madela, Star Records; 9) "Courageous," Jimi, Warner Music; 10) "Chances," Charice Pempengco, Star Records

Billboard's Top 10 singles

1) "I Gotta Feeling," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope; 2) "Boom Boom Pow," The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope; 3) "How I Roll," Britt, Hip-Hop Since 1979; 4) "Knock You Down," Keri Hilson feat. Kanye West & Ne-Yo, Interscope; 5) "Love Game," Lady Gaga, Interscope; 6) "I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)," Pitbull, Ultra; 7) "Fire Burning," Sean Kingston, Epic; 8) "Party Rock Anthem," LMFAO feat. Lauren Bennett & GoonRock, Interscope; 9) "Poker Dealer," Lyrikal Pack, Private Beats; 10) "Waking Up in Vegas," Katy Perry, Capitol.

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4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
6 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
7 PYOK BULAG
8 UnBeElIm: DCBE
9 VILLA ESTRELLA
10 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

ERMITA

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 PYOK BULAG
6 VILLA ESTRELLA
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

METRO EAST

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
5 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
7 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
8 VILLA ESTRELLA

NOVALICHES

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 VILLA ESTRELLA
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

PIONEER

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

STA. ROSA

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

LIPA

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

DASMARINAS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 KAMASUTRA NIGHTS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

IMUS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 KAMASUTRA NIGHTS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 VILLA ESTRELLA

STARMILLS

1 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
2 VILLA ESTRELLA
3 DRAG ME TO HELL
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
6 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

ANGELES

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

TACLOBAN

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

BACOLOD

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
4 THE COFFIN
5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 RESERVE

ILOILO

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
5 THE COFFIN
6 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen

Charice still has stage fright

By Gerry Pisos
Contributor

EVEN AFTER A PHENOMENAL STREAK OF acclaimed performances around the world, who would ever think Charice Pempengco still has stage fright?

Ironically this occurs, she says, whenever she takes the stage in front of a Filipino audience.

"Mas kinakabahan ako kasi sa Pilipinas, pinaghihirapan talaga ng mga kapwa ko ang kanta o steak," the 17-year-old belter sings euphoria during the launch of "My Inspiration," her second and last album with Star Records.

In contrast, Charice adds, she feels at ease while belting scores on her favorite of "Oprah" or the "Ellen DeGeneres Show."

Asked how the 88 singing Asianhits can reach out to millions before 10,000 spectators at the Dodgers Stadium in Los Angeles, or "God Bless America" in a Busch Gardens concert celebration to even "Lupang Hinirang," Charice replies, "Parehosilang po."

Charice admits her confidence of the Philippine audience will may not be well-balanced because she has not been given the proper exposure. For instance, a Manny Pacquiao boxing match. She says she would really be more honored if she got to sing that.

CHARICE Pempengco

Big voice

Asked Andrea can why Morissette started at her talent even a year after her videos were uploaded on YouTube, she remarks: "Siguro dahil ako na-exist sa mga panahon ng Internet."

This big voice is about to be heard in another album, produced by Sir Anselmo, mentor David Foster to be released in the US on the 9th of July.

All these things, she says, are special to her but not due to the global acclaim it brings, but because she became loved more, have since grown exponentially.

"Nakikita ko pa rin ang mga sarili ko ngayon dito," she says. "Hindi ko siguro po ako makapaniwala sa mga nangyayari ngayon. Sobrang laki ng mga biyaya."

The album "My Inspiration," currently a hot seller (landing in On Top 10 of the Odyssey album charts), is dedicated to her mom Raquel, who like previous with Charice on a cover of "You And Me Against The World."

"My mom is my inspiration," Charice says. "She has always been my strength. Di ko siguro maiyayaring yung sa achieve ko ngayon kung hindi nya ako sinuportahan."

IRMA Adlawan plays a battered woman in "Ang Panggagahasa ni Rio Fe."

A narrative on a woman's will to survive

By Maricel B. Cruz

"IT'S TIME FOR WOMEN TO PUT AN END to the abuse," said actor-director Irma Adlawan, who plays a battered woman in the film "Ang Panggagahasa kay Rio (The Rape of Rio)."

The film, written and directed by Jerrold Tarog, Maximilian Alvin Pigon, is an entry in this year's Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival, which runs from July 17-26 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Pasay City.

Adlawan, who has been married for 20 years now, has her own opinion about how women should be treated. "It's hard to fathom why some women allow themselves to be physically abused," she told Inquirer Entertainment on Friday. "I have a hard time accepting it. Maaksi ko sa dibdib."

Adlawan had a fun talk with filmmaker Quinto Mamigonian, Mitz Fernandez, 38, Ira Stanton, 34, Eileen Ibrahim, 30's, and Ethel Benjamin, 18.

Research-based

Tarog, who is currently taking up his doctorate in Philippine Studies at the University of the Philippines, said the story was a result of a research paper he wrote on the effect of globalization on the Filipino woman.

"The movie is a poetic and allegorical take to stress a woman's call to survive from oppressive environment," he explained. "It represents the migrant woman commonly at the mercy of job destructors and yet remarkably resilient."

Tarog continued: "The movie tries to redefine the word 'panggagahasa' as it comes in different forms for the Filipino woman. Rape, whether emotionally, socially, psychologically or physically, strips away a woman's dignity and freedom."

In the movie, Adlawan plays Fe, an OFW who loses her job due to recession. She tries to return to take care of her abusive husband, Danilo (Nonie Buencamino). The husband's love is put to the test when gifts for Fe keep making an extension & by their cheating. He's loyalty to Danilo wanes when a young lover, Arturo (TJ Trinidad), gives her hope to realize her own abusive relationship.

Adlawan in mind

Tarog said he wrote the movie with Adlawan in mind. "She first caught my attention as a theater actress—towering, when she was in production Pecina Sarasota Pro Intercultura," he explained.

The director has nothing but praise for his lead star. "She studied her character very carefully," Tarog said of Adlawan. "Think Cinemaya. She had to dig dirt, carry heavy objects and climb hills. She did them all with no complaints."

Tarog noted co-producer Abrahamg Ang were pleased with The Premiere's Cinco Cruz Manila while filming. "The staff members did not just help us with research, they also readily accepted into the roles of assistants/producers and looked for financial support for the film," said Ang.

"Panggagahasa Kay Fe" also features Mercedes Cabral, Joel Molina and Mercy Candelaria.

What's inside

Dep'Ed hiring over 9,000 new teachers / G3

The hilarious side of math / G3

LEARNING

Editor Chiela Bunal Formoso

Serial Reading

TO MARK INTERnational Literacy Day in September, we are coming out with a new story series for young readers.

Teachers: Sign up for free Inquirer copies for your Grade 3 or 4 class for the duration of the series.

E-mail or text us: YES, SIGN ME UP <Your name, school, school address, landline, mobile number>.

E-mail us learning@inquirer.com.ph. Text to 0922-8182941 or 0918-1834861.

The day Mary's girls (and boys) sang 'God Bless America'

Story on page 4

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney with Sister Maria Cleo, SPC, and students of the Sisters of Mary Girls Home School

Industry leaders have spoken, mobile phone users have chosen: Sun Cellular leads the way

Keeping the reward for its relentless commitment to delivering the best value mobile communication products and services to Filipino consumers, Sun Cellular bagged **The Most Promising Telecom Service Provider of the Year in Asia-Pacific** in the annual Frost & Sullivan Asia-Pacific Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Awards held recently at the St. Regis Hotel in Singapore.

The said citation is bestowed to an ICT organization that has shown excellence in three major operation benchmarks in the entire Asia Pacific region: exemplary growth, future growth potential and 2008 performance.

Frost & Sullivan cited "Sun Cellular's strong revenue and subscriber growth, widespread and innovative service plans and investments have made them stand out against all other operators in the Asia-Pacific." It also gave the thumbs up for the telecom network's innovative pricing plans such as the **24/7 Call and Text Unlimited** which has made voice calling more affordable to the Philippines.

Sun Cellular is the **first** and only Telecom Service Provider to offer unlimited calls **and** texts for as low as P35 per day. Eventually, this became the benchmark for value-for-money offers in mobile communication services.

"In 2008 (the Philippine Market) witnessed one of the best performances from a non-incumbent mobile operator as Sun Cellular was able to gain nearly 4% of the market share points bringing its total market share to 12% and grew at the expense of two very established competitors" says Mini Hemnani, Industry Manager at Frost & Sullivan.

This eventually earned for the network the trust and satisfaction of more mobile phone users. Proof to this is the emergence of Sun Cellular as the **LEADER IN POSTPAID GROWTH** in the Philippines, with 7 out of 10 new postpaid subscribers in 2008 choosing Sun Cellular over competitors.

Sun Cellular has also ventured into mobile broadband with the launch of its **Sun Broadband Wireless** Service, using the most advanced Mobile Broadband Internet technology, as well as its mobile landline service with the launch of **SunLife** in cooperation with Digitel.

Crammed with its innovative pricing and best value offers, Sun Cellular also takes pride in its **ADVANCED CHARGING SYSTEM** where subscribers get to avail full value of their load: mobile down to the last peso. This is Sun Cellular's solution to subscribers' complaints like "missing load" and allocations, "incorrect" call credits and unused load balances.

With the Advanced Charging System, subscribers pay only for the services already utilized by calls and texts - **no hidden charges!** They can even check their available load balance everyday without being charged from their current available load. With Sun Cellular subscribers are sure that they get exactly what they pay for.

Sun Cellular is truly steps ahead when it comes to innovative, affordable and reliable mobile communications. And with Sun's relentless drive towards best value communications, subscribers can be assured that the best is yet to come from Sun Cellular. With over 4,700 cell sites to serve its more than 10 million subscribers, Sun Cellular continues to invest this year surmounting $70 million to increase network coverage and further enhance network capacity and quality.

Sun Cellular Chairman Mr. James L. Go receiving the award from Mr. Rudi Vrey, President, APAC at Cavapoint Networks (S)Pte. Ltd (Singapore) Pte. Ltd who was one of the judges in the 2009 Frost & Sullivan Asia Pacific ICT Awards)

sun CELLULAR

sun shines even brighter!

Presented the 2009 Frost & Sullivan Asia-Pacific ICT Award: The Most Promising Telecom Service Provider of the Year in Asia-Pacific

"Its strong revenue and subscriber growth, widespread and innovative service plans and investments made in 2008, have made Sun Cellular stand out against all other operators in Asia-Pacific."

– Frost & Sullivan
Awarded in June 2009, St. Regis Hotel, Singapore

- Leader in Postpaid growth. 7 out of 10 new postpaid subscribers choose Sun Cellular.*
- The first and only network that offers 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited.
- Over 10 million subscribers and growing.
- With over 4,700 cell sites nationwide and fast expanding.
- Most advanced Mobile Broadband Internet technology.

To the millions of Sun subscribers, thank you for believing in us!

sun CELLULAR

Playgrounds for the MIND

Member Schools

Ebarle's one woman exhibit at UST Museum

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences launched recently Ana Aurleta Ebarle's one-woman exhibition entitled "Pinagmulan". exhibit will run until Aug. 1. The exhibit features paintings that showcase the artist's fascination with Philippine flora. Replicated in bold colors of blue, yellow, red and green, Ebarle's latest series displays her sensitivity to the motifs found in native art. Coming from outside the village of Angat in Bulacan province, Ebarle said early batterns from them, she also pays homage to them.

In her recent paintings, the influences of patterns and colors she has seen in both traditional and contemporary textiles, pottery, baskets and even paintings of Filipino motifs find an outlet to exist. This time she does not only salute the intricate patterns in the art of the Masters, she embellishes them with a layer of tissues that is distinctively hers. The energy and passion prevalent in her paintings seem to belie how a sensitivity that she must have recently rediscovered in her. Finally, Ebarle is coming out as an artist.

Jose Antonio Ebarle finished her degree in advertising arts at the University of Santo Tomas, College of Fine Arts and Design. Having achieved professionally in her career (Ebarle manages the marketing of Ester Garrell in the Philippines) and with her children grown and declining careers of their own, she is at last able to return to her paintings. Previously, it is her dedication to the Philippine Art Education cause of which she is now the president that has spurred her drive to paint with fervor.

"Pinagmulan" is an encouragement for Filipinos to appreciate art. It is also a testament to an artist's determination to achieve her personal goals and the confidence to make the creative energy she has found from art made by fine/commercial/audiovisual artists.

The UST Museum is located at Mezzanine Level, Main Bldg. UST. Regular Hours: Monday to Friday, 8 to 5:00 p.m. For more details, please call UST Museum at 731-3033, local 8265-8007.

EMPOWERING SCHOOLS THROUGH E-LEARNING
COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING (CAL), AN AFFILIATE OF INFORMATICS Philippines, has been tapped to integrate its online learning facilities in the curricula of Don Bosco Technical Institutions. The memorandum of understanding was signed on Dec. 2008 by Rev. Fr. Wilfredo Ronquillo, SDB, Provincial Superior of the Philippine Province of the Society of Don Bosco and Mr. Ricardo Ongpin, President of Informatics Philippines. Under the agreement, the Don Bosco Technical Institutions will be the first schools in the country to offer blended learning in their curricula. Blended learning is basically classroom monitoring lectures facilitated through online learning, an innovative teaching method now being employed in many schools around the world. Incorporating e-learning materials into a schools' current curriculum is a cost effective way of upgrading the course offerings as well as streamlining resources and time. Informatics Philippines is the first e-learning provider to reach an understanding with Don Bosco Technical Institutions. Present during the signing of the memorandum of agreement are Rev. Fr. Wilfredo Ronquillo, SDB, Provincial Superior of the Philippine Province of the Society of Don Bosco; Mr. Ricardo Ongpin, CAL and Informatics Philippines President; and Christopher Marshall, CAL vice president.

CEU launches quality awards search

CENTRO ESCOLAR UNIVERSITY LAUNCHES THE MISSAL SEARCH FOR distinct men and women behind the continued success of the university in the 7th Quality Awards Day. The theme for this year's activity is "Responding to the Global Challenges through Excellence and Quality" and it will be held on July 17 at the CEU Lucena Avelino Auditorium. The Quality Awards Day aims to give recognition to faculty and employees who strive to render high quality service. It also recognizes those who help in attaining excellence in their work, environment and those who promote sound work attitude and ethics for the institution. Nominees for the awards are the following: Dr. Ruben Canoy for outstanding professors and employees will be screened to name the search committees and bodies for the nominees of last year's winners. Teresa Yuson who was named Outstanding Non-Teaching employee; Rosemarie Bondoc who was the Outstanding Senior Staff Category and Princess Lucena who emerged as the Outstanding Teacher of the Year.

MERIAM COLLEGE GETS DARK GREEN SCHOOLS (DGS) AWARD

Meriam College in Loyola Heights, Quezon City is one of the first three schools to receive the Dark Green School in Action (DGS) award from the Environmental Education Network of the Philippines (EENP), together with De La Salle University in Dasmariñas, Cavite and Visayas State University in Baybay, Leyte. The award for Meriam College was received by Dr. Teresa Payao, second from right, executive director of the Environmental Studies Institute who is also vice president while Mrs. Rose del Rosario, EENP president, Dr. Edna Co, De La Salle University Dasmariñas Cavite; Dr. Florencia Mora, Visayas State University and Dr. Angeline Rabang, DGS Project leader. The DGS program is a system of accreditation whereby schools participate in environmental friendly activities and are rated as dark green, green, or brown. Meriam College is categorized as environmental friendly school in its policies, administration and finance, academics, research, outreach and production. The awarding ceremony was held at the Meriam College campus.

TIP Manila EE quizzers spell victory three times

AFTER SWEEPING LATE LAST YEAR THE REgional and national championship awards in the 4th Q Regional Math Challenge and NCR Math Olympics and Contest, two of the most prestigious contests of the Integrated Institute of Electrical Engineers (IIEE), the TIP Manila Electrical Engineering scholars garnered yet another championship trophy as their victories set the stage from the other schools in the 2009 IIEE Elite Philippine Electrical Code Quiz. The TIP Manila EE team composed of Jeremy Jacinto, Jenny Ann Mendoza, Jefferson Chiu, Mark Joseph Pontes and Jesus Ricardo Real their first taste of victory in championship in the IIEE 22nd National Quiz Show regional finals in September 2008 and national finals in November 2008. Finally, Ricardo and Jhai who competed in the 2008 Regional Quiz Show and the IIEE Elite Blade Wizard Contest regional level and national level also took on the same duties. In February, Finally, Ricardo and Jhai, together with two other TIP EE students, Paul Domingo and Ronaldo Agsay, encouraged our TIP to the limelight by winning the championship trophy in the 2009 IIEE Philippine Electrical Code (PEC) Quiz. Engineer Ramon Jacinto, Engineer Ronaldo Lastimoso, faculty members of the TIP Manila EE Department, served as faculty coaches of the TIP EE Scholars.

UE sets testimonial for its new dentists, dentistry faculty

THE 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLASS OF '69 WILL HOLD A TESTIMONIAL DINNER HONORING THE UE College of Dentistry's (UECD) successful examinees in the June Dentist Licensure Examination and faculty of graduation on July 10, 7 p.m., at the Dentists Park Hotel Ballroom. Four UE College of Dentistry (UECD) fresh graduates obtained Top 10th, 6th and 10th places in the June Dentist Licensure Examination. UECD achieved a 98 passing percentage with 57 successful examinees out of 58, maintaining its no. 1 rank among top performing schools in the 29-48 examinees category, according to UECD dean Dr. Brenda G. Dee, the success may be attributed to UE's high academic standards and top quality teaching. UE's four graduates in this licensure exam in top 10 are Anya Mitzi Sampaong Dolay (2nd /83.67 percent); Lucille Layden Sing Ey (6th /82.34 percent); Bianca Louie Dineng Cua (8th /82.12 percent); and Kathleen Giselle Luna Torres (10th /82.45 percent). For the complete list of UECD successful examinees and other details, visit the UE web site, www.ue.edu.ph, or the UECD Dean's Office, UE Manila, or call tel. 736-0471 to 82 loc. 321.

Letran, Intramuros launch 2010 Letran Awards

REV FR. EMERSON B. LASIA, O.P., RECTOR AND PRESIDENT OF COLEGIO de San Juan de Letran, announced the start of the acceptance of nominations for the Letran Awards (TLA). The announcement was made during the regular Flag Raising Mass for the school's alumni last June 27. The highlight of the month was the presentation of the awards guidelines and criteria by Arnulfo Santiago, award then-chairman of the board of directors of the Letran Alumni Association Inc. The guidelines and nomination forms are available at the office of the Letran Alumni Association Inc. and Public Affairs. These may also be accessed at http://www.alumni.ajp.o.vera.Letran.edu.

SMI-IC holds seminar in Adamson University

INSTITUTIONS BELONGING TO THE SOUTH MANILA INTERFAITH EDUcational Commission (SMI-IC) gathered together once more for the Seminar on Teaching Methodologies in the Tertiary Level held recently at the ST Andrew Hall Room of Adamson University. For the past three years, the SMI-IC has been hosting various seminar-workshops/trainings for updating teachers in technology as an ally in challenging effective teaching, and to apply different strategies that cater to students from various disciplines. Committee chair Dr. Virginia Gonzaga of St. Scholastica's College gave the overview to seminar participants, after an Alumni Ave. La M. Magno, AMA VP for administration, gave the welcome address and Dr. Emelinda T. Marquez, Jr. (left) dean, Liberal Arts and Education and chair of SMI-IC's Council of Deanery delivered the opening remarks. Among the topics discussed in the seminar-workshop were intercultural education Dr. Emilina Hernandez of Adamson shared how she is able to gather and develop to help educators strengthen their teaching strategies. Dr. Roberto Diaz of the Philippine Normal University shared the techniques in teaching mathematics to make seemingly confusing formulas easier for students to understand. St. Paul University-Manila's (SPU-M) professor Maximino Bystander gave a demonstration on strategies for teaching health sciences subjects, while Lei Romeo of the Don Bosco College of St. Benildo (DLS-CSB) did a demonstration on teaching methods for technical courses.

'Kaya Natin' caravan visits Faith

FAITH ACADEMY OF TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITIES (FATH) (-101) led recently "Kaya Natin (I Can)" Advocacy caravan to promote the community's awareness of current issues affecting the political situation in the country, the event featured talks on current awareness and electoral readiness for the coming May 2010 elections. The talks were delivered by the campus heads from the FATH Limited School, Tertiary School and Civic Edge Law. "Kaya Natin!" is a political movement that aims to encourage the youth to support honest, credible and awakened governance. The speakers were Pampanga Governor Ed "Lanang" Panlilio, alumni of Manila University School of Government professor Ramon Bato and law students Hanna Lopa Bueno Sonia Lorenzo.

Universal Studios Singapore opens auditions at the STI Center of Arts

FILIPINO ENTERTAINERS ARE IN FOR A CHANCE of a lifetime as Universal Studios Singapore (USS) holds its international auditions in key cities in the asia-Pacific, including Metro Manila, to complete its 200-man cast composed of the world's best actors, singers, dancers, stunt performers, child-wonders, puppeteers, vocal impersonators, and celebrity look-alikes.

The USS casting team aims to round up the best of the best entertainers in Brisbane, Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Metro Manila for the theme park that is part of the Resorts World at Sentosa. Scheduled on July 9 and 10, the auditions team will scoop to the STI Center of Arts, located at the U.P of the STI Academic Center in Global City, Taguig in search for talents in the Philippines to be part of the USS family showcase these talents.

For more details, call +632 799-9999 or +632 812-1371 (784) and look for Joanna Mariano. Auditions will begin at 10 a.m. and participants are required to be present at the STI Center of Arts an hour before the start of the auditions. Only applicants who are 18 years old and above will be accepted.

The USS auditions at the STI Center of Arts is in coordination with its performing arts partner, Transpro.

Tanuan Powerhouse Design Competition grand winner

By Romeo D. Quinio jr.

STEPHEN ESCUDERO IS THE GRAND prize winner of the Tanuan Downhouse Design Competition. This was announced by Hedcor, the leading producer of clean and renewable energy and the largest privately-run of run-of-river hydropower in the Philippines. A total of 22 students from various schools participated in the said competition. Five students came from University of the Philippines - Diliman, two from Ateneo de Davao and seven from the university.

The competition was launched sometime in July 2008. It took off with an orientation given by Hedcor competition officials. A briefing was also conducted in the premises of Hedcor's hydro-power plant in Manat. The briefing contained the technical aspects of the hydro-power system and the design requirements and criteria. It also gave the participants the opportunity to have an exposure to visit the site along Tanuguan River, Batangas.

LPU Batangas sends its VP to US

LICEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES UNIVERsity in Batangas sent its vice president for academic support services and advanced affairs (VPASAA), Dr. Dante R. Bustil, to the United States of America to visit LPU prospective hosts.

Dr. Bustil, who is concurrently the concurrent dean of LPU's College of Hospitality Management Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), decided on LPU practitioners of Seaford Hotel, a Ten-star hotel in Washington DC, and Kings Dominion, a premier themed amusement park in Doswell, Virginia.

Upcoming roles were visited by Dr. Bustil are in the housekeeping, food and beverage, and banquet and catering divisions of Gaylord, while those in Kings Dominion are in ticketing. LPU students were the first Filipino practicumers ever to the United States.

9,153 new public school teachers for SY 2009-10

By Jovey E. Espinosa

AN ADDITIONAL 9,153 public school teachers will be hired by the Department of Education this school year, bringing to 501,358 the total number of public school teachers in the country. DepEd has set aside nearly P3 billion of this year's P174-billion budget for the new positions.

Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said, despite the creation of the new positions, the 42,206 public primary and secondary schools nationwide still needed some 23,000 teachers.

According to DepEd, 5,398 of the new teachers will be assigned to elementary schools while 3,755 will go to high schools.

Southern Tagalog got the most Teacher I appointees with 1,338, followed by Metro Manila, 810; Central Visayas, 812; Ilocos, Cordillera, Bicol and other, Soltar Radnor, Surveggaot and Seaweed Island in CAR (Sarakkaya-gen), The Central Luzon, 721; Eastern Visayas, 600; Bicol, 531; Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 516; and Zamboanga Peninsula, 408.

Vacancies remain

Lapus said budgetary constraints made it impossible to fill all vacancies. The bulk of the DepEd budget, around P138 billion, goes to salaries of teaching and non-teaching personnel.

In the past four years, the department hired 40,914 teachers. It hired 6,478 in 2005, 7,237 in 2006, 16,234 in 2007 and 10,868 in 2008.

The DepEd accounts for a little over a third of the government bureaucracy. More than 350,000 public school teachers currently handle primary classes while close to 140,000 are in secondary schools.

The average teacher-student ratio in elementary schools is 1:36. In high school it is 1:39, according to the latest DepEd Report Card.

But Anselo Tinio, chair of the militant Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), maintained unimpressed by efforts to ease the shortage of teachers.

"For nearly a decade, the department's administration has failed to eliminate the teacher shortage, resulting to an unprecedented increase in class sizes that reach 60-80 students, especially in urban areas. As a result, public school teachers are more exploited and the quality of education has further deteriorated," he said.

Focus on growth

Lapus, however, said DepEd continued to focus on the professional growth and welfare of teachers and non-teaching staff.

Human resource development is one of DepEd's priority thrusts. Others are expanding opportunities for preschool education, increasing pupil participation by reaching the out-of-school, raising the proficiency level of students, improving health and nutrition of school children, strengthening public-private partnership in education, providing more resources for learning, and addressing school resource requirements. "Teachers' welfare and benefits are our paramount concern. Why? Because teachers are our frontline," Lapus said. He said "the school system can only be as good as our teachers."

Improve competencies

To enhance teaching competencies, the DepEd has training programs for preschool, elementary, high school, as well as middle and special education teachers. These include the Madrasah DepEd Problem Program, Gawad Para sa Mga Natatanging Guro sa Science and Mathematics (in coordination with the Department of Science and Technology) and the Commission on Higher Education), and a similar program for nonnative speakers of English, Filipino, social studies, music, arts, and physical education, among others.

DepEd was also trying to improve teachers' living standards through a recently launched Land Lapus.

The department, together with various teacher organizations, is pushing for the passage of House Bill 4736 and its counterpart, Senate Bill 2426, that will raise the monthly salaries of public school teachers by P5,000.

Jonathan Malaya, DepEd assistant secretary for special projects and legislative liaison, formulated the bonuses scope of a similar bill that would. "This disparity in our basic pay and benefits as compared to similarly ranked personnel in other government agencies highlights our sad plight as teachers, the members of our youth and future leaders, considering our profession is equal. If not more peculiar, in terms of duties and hazards."

EUREKA! *Gemma N. Lee-Chua*

The lighter side of math

TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL Science and Technology Month, let us look at softly puzzles and the lighter side of mathematics.

A reader who wishes to remain anonymous sent the following brainteaser:

"Lend me a peso," says Ana to Maria. "You've got twice as much as I have." "No," says Maria. "Then I'll have only one and a half times as much as you." How much does Maria have?

Think about this for a while. Did you get the answer?

Norwegian math test

The following riddle has been circulating in the math community for a while. Just this, with some editing, is the most humorous version. Forwarded by my colleague Antonette Mendoza of Ateneo Math professor Carlito Tinio Pa.

A Norwegian worker wants a job. But the boss won't hire him until he passes a math test. "First, without using numbers, represent the number nine," says the boss.

"Easy," says the Norwegian guy, and draws three fours. "Two and two and two make nine."

"Okay, you're the boss. "Next, again do not use numbers, but represent the number 90."

The Norwegian picks up the picture he has just drawn and makes a smudge on each tree. "One yr go. Each of the trees is dirty now. So it's dirty trees, and dirty trees, and dirty trees. Did it, sir."

To continued the Norwegian, the boss says, "Last question, many rules. Just represent the number 100."

The Norwegian stares into space, then he picks up the pictures again and makes a little mark at the base of each tree. "One yr go. You hundred."

"What?"

"A little dog come along and pooped by each tree. So now you got dirty trees and a turd, dirty tree and a turd, dirty tree and a turd, which makes one hundred. So when do I start?"

Word play

This e-mail has also been circulating for some time. The version we got by Mitchelle Outstanding Teacher award winner Elmie Galingco. Anagrams are words with the same letters arranged in a different order. The clever thing about the following arrangement is that, when like or not, they make a lot of sense:

Dormitory - Dirty room
Astronomer - Moon starer
Desperation - A rope ends it
The eyes - They see
The Morse Code - Here come dots

Slot machines - Cash lost in me
Animosity - Is a enmity
Election results - Lies—let's recount
Snooze alarm - Alas, no more it's
A decimal point - I'm a dot in place
The earthquakes That gave shake
And my favorite: Eleven plus two - Twelve plus one

The mathtitude

Here are six tenkeyless readers' math consciousness of the heartfelter, forwarded by lawyer-turnstyle professor Rafael Isidoro. He came upon the Mathtitudes in a poster in Brazil in 2003.

"Showed are the mathematical to spank, for they shall see patterns and relationships.

"Blessed are those who assess even their poor results in math, for they shall be taught.

"Blessed are the mathematically meek, for they shall gain satisfaction with geometry.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after mathematical knowledge, for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the stern and unready in computation, for they shall obtain mercy from them.

"Blessed are the logical, for they shall understand reasoning.

"Blessed are those who do their math because of regularity, for they shall learn the norm.

"Rejoice in the study of mathematics, for great will be your reward in life."

Love and math

And who says love and math do not mix? A local can be expressed by an equation and drawn on the plane. Salduna dacuth ca to to for blog: http://sdjsaldana.blogspot.com/2009/02/brief-equation-of-love.html. Interested love beat for a discussion of math and love.

"I also started a discussion on Facebook on the connection between love and math," says Shelly. "My purpose is to make my students appreciate the beauty of math and to show that math can be fun."

Answer to the brainteaser:

Maria has 10.8 pesos, while Ana has 9.

E-mail the author at lleechua@philonline.com

Filipino expat scientists, engineers hope to contribute to RP dev't

THE PHILIPPINE AMERICAN Academy of Science and Engineering (PAASE) will hold its 20th annual conference on July 15-18 at the Miriam de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

With the theme "Linking Science & Engineering to Development," the conference aims to promote the dissemination of researches in the country's priority goals. It also aims to promote science infrastructure among researchers in and out of the country.

Around 350 participants are expected to attend, including Filipino scientists and engineers based in different parts of the world.

One of the expected outputs of the conference is the identification of collaborative projects that support priority goals of the Philippines.

PAASE hopes to reverse the trend of Filipino scientists and engineers using their talents and skills to help other countries. It wants the country to experience a brain gain by encouraging overseas Filipinos to contribute to Philippine development.

PAASE is an organization of scientists, engineers and researchers in the Philippines, the United States and other countries. Its principal objectives are to promote the advancement of science, engineering and technology; to encourage collaborative work among scientists and engineers of Philippine descent in research and development through scholarly and scientific endeavors; to support efforts that advance science and technology; and to recognize and honor the achievements of scientists and engineers of Philippine descent.

PAASE was founded in 1980 in Indiana, USA, by doctors Severino L. Inoi, Jr., Mariquito A. Tolan II, Bienvenido C. Melendres. It had 220 members as of 2008.

Public schools checked for electrical fire hazards

THE MANILA ELECTRIC Company was a major participant in this year's Brigada Eskwela that prepared public schools for a new school year.

The power company conducted detailed electrical assessment of public schools within its franchise area to reduce the risk of fires due to faulty electrical wiring or overloading of systems.

Ernesto P. Ramoncillo, Meralco senior assistant vice president and head of the central distribution services, said the company started participating in the Department of Education's initiative in 2004.

It initially provided DepEd about 2,000 copies of the manual for electrical inspection of facilities. Later, Meralco employees volunteered to do the inspection themselves.

They checked external and internal electrical facilities of school buildings to ensure they were operating efficiently and safely compliant.

Meralco employees eliminated items that could hinder effective operation of electrical wires.

PERALTA: Volunteers check a school's electrical wiring.

The Meralco team submitted to the schools reports on what needed to be done and cost estimates of repair or rehabilitation.

Inspectors told team members that the most common problems were dilapidated or exposed wiring, overloading of electrical systems, outdated electrical equipment, and even, illegal tapping of electrical services.

This year, inspectors were conducted by 50 Meralco centers and 19 distribution services.

Ramoncillo said joining the Brigada Eskwela was part of the company's corporate social responsibility.

Student art tilt now accepting entries

THE SHELL NATIONAL ART Students Art Competition (SNAC), now in its 42nd year, has added a new calendar category that seeks to promote and preserve the country's cultural heritage.

Shell recognizes that the country's youngest painting artists are essential to open its eyes to college students.

The SNAC now has five categories. Oil/Acrylic, Watercolor, Sculpture, Digital Fine Arts and Calendar. In oil/acrylic, Grand prize winners get P50,000 cash each. Cash and medals will be given to runners-up.

Schools of grand prize winner will get special grants in support of faculty development programs.

Winner of the Calendar category is "Sinulog" by Ivin Pilapil. Tenderfoots are expected to depict scenery, landmarks, everyday life, or historical events in 1600-1930.

Winning works will be featured in the 2010 corporate calendar of Shell companies in the Philippines. The next category includes the first SNAC short run. Winners will find their entries' place of the 1951 company calendar.

The other four categories will remain without changes.

Previous winners of the Shell National Students Art Competition include Rudyard Arbit, Jose Joya, Ang Kiukok and Botong Francisco. Shell has also sponsors like Samsung Foundation and other top contemporary artists.

Entries will be received at the following locations on July 29: Shell depots and installations outside Metro Manila; Gallery Orange, 2/F, Joseph's Annex, Makalapas, Bacolod City; Negros Occidental; Mission Hills, Bankuta Drive, Iloilo City; GAF Art Center, 68 Ouano Ave., Cebu City; Gondola Gallery, 98 Davao Medical School Drive, Bajada, Davao City.

On Aug. 30-31, entries may be brought to the Shell Art Shop, 698 Aurora Blvd., New Manila, Quezon City (in front of St. Paul's Hospital).

Sponsors title your are old Isapromidik, Ar 21, Shell 9 Pesos, Shellene, Shell Skills, National Book Store, Ayala Museum, The Digest, CAP Art Center, Galeria Cubao Gallery, Gallery Orange and Mono Gallery.

Competition rules are available from offices of Shell field or Student Affairs Assist. Filipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, Shell House, 156 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City; and any Shell office or depot; including. You may also log on to www.shell.com.ph.

TRAINING PACKAGES

Mapua Institute of Technology president Dr. Reynaldo Vea turns over one of two engine training simulators donated by Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation (TMP) and Toyota Motor Philippines Foundation (TMPF). The donation aims to help upgrade the school's vocational facilities under the Toyota-Mapua laboratory classroom program involving the construction for BS in Mechanical Engineering Minor in Automotive Engineering. Looking on are (from left) TMPF education center head Ronald Gaspar, TMPF president Dr. David Ecural TMP executive president for consumer service operations Masanori Ohtaru.

TEXT OR E-MAIL us your complaints relating to education. However, parents who have questions or complaints about fees in public schools should call DepEd hotlines 636 1663 or 6387528, send text to message service 0919-4566027 or e-mail action@deped.gov.ph.

The day Mary's girls (and boys) sang 'God Bless America'

Text by Cielo Raoul Perezcoso
Photos by Rossy Horvilleda

STUDENTS of the Sisters of Mary Girlstown in Cebu synchronize their song with some hand jives.

FROM THE STAGE where the graves have been invited to stand, one can see the perfect lines formed by the girls, perhaps over 1,000 of them. Only discipline can make lines like these.

And then—their voices strong, their hand movements synchronized, looking like they are lit from within—they sing *God Bless America, land that I love. Stand beside her and guide her, through the night with the light from above. From the mountains to the prairies, to the ocean white with foam, God bless America, my home sweet home.*

A choreography of emotion and amazing grace, the medley that moves Kristie Anne Kenney in tears. It's the one American song among the guests-as-usual repertoire.

"That was chosen to welcome me today by forming a special song that honors our country and my heritage, and to do it so brilliantly is even wonderful more," responds Mr Kenney upon being handed the microphone. "And I have to say what makes me feel the most at home is that kind of kindness and welcoming spirit."

It isn't every day that the US ambassador to the Philippines comes a-calling on the Sisters of Mary (SOM) and their wards at the Girlstown in Barangay Tolong, Cordova, and this other more, she comes bearing gifts.

"I thought you some books because if you're like me and you do one of what you see out there, you can do a lot of that through books," she says to the children applauding.

The girls are all in uniforms of blue and white. Mission cotton. In this live-in high school founded in 1980 by Msgr. Alcuin Schwartz, reading is highly valued, but so is moral and nutritional formation. The girls are taught to live a life of simplicity, charity, gratitude and joy. Motto: virtues.

None of these kids is holding an iPod or whose Blackberry phone or any such cool gadget. For some these days. That's because these girls, and their fellow scholars at SOM Boystown (next to be confused with the facility for juvenile delinquents), come from the poor families of Lahug and Mabolo-an served by the SOM schools in Cebu.

At Girlstown and Boystown, they get grade-free education, room and board, medical and dental services, and to modest heaps of hope.

WASHINGTON Sec. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Ambassador Kristie Kenney, and Sister Elena G. Belarmino, SM, during the welcome program

THE ROMBLLA component of tandem duo Girlstown and Boystown provides traditional entertainment.

Great opportunity

"You should be very proud of the great opportunity you have being given here," continues Ms Kenney, nodding toward Sister Maria Cho, superior of Girlstown, and Sister Elena Belarmino, superior of Boystown, who are seated in the front row with their guests.

Upon entrance at an SOM school, children must be 12 to 13 years old, start here as average at at least 90 percent in study grade, and must have passed the school's entrance exam and need assistance. They must not have had prior attendance at any high school. A student who has graduated is currently studying in any SOM school does not qualify, and must run test-free.

Why—the benefits of a free and good Catholic education must be spread to as many needy families as possible.

Besides being residential schools, Girlstown and Boystown are different from other high schools in that they are open year-round and their students receive intensive vocational training, especially in their senior year where they are allowed specialization in their chosen trades.

"To better prepare them to land good jobs," says Sister Gloria Amy Lucot, principal of Girlstown, "Or, once they're carrying a little more, prepare them for perhaps a small-scale business of their own or as a group."

Students at Girlstown are taught housekeeping, industrial sewing machine operation, stenotyping and bookkeeping, electronics, advanced dressmaking, basic computer operation, and the culinary arts.

Those at Boystown are trained in electronics, machine shop and welding, computer technology (CMPT), metal mechanics, and carving.

Students who have an interest in agriculture are allowed to raise sundry vegetables for consumption by the school canteen and to learn greenhouse management. Students from Boystown go to the Cebu Technological University, the Department of Agriculture, and the Bohol Island Institute for Rural Reconstruction.

Start with a dream

"Dreams really accumulative for doing your best every day, for working hard," Ambassador Kenney tells her audience.

While a sizable block of the students' daily schedule is devoted to academic instruction and vocational training, students are allowed free periods throughout the day from 9:30 p.m. lights out. Little wonder than of 53 slaves in Girlstown and 25 in Boystown, around 75 percent are alumni.

Over the years, Girlstown Cordo and Cebu combined have produced almost 18,000 students while Boystown, also at both locations, count more 26,000 graduates.

The success rate is very low; 90 percent of students who came to see freshmen are able to finish high school.

Graduates can apply from the more than SOM beneficiaries in growing strikes college scholarships, jobs placements, depending on their needs.

Some are offered employment in the SOM facilities. Of the 72 teachers for the girls and the 30 for the boys, "around 20 percent are our own graduates who came back with their college degrees," says Sister Amy.

But even higher is the percentage of graduates who stay on to support personnel—approximately 98 percent of Girlstown's 68 support personnel and Boystown's 53.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney pays SOM Girlstown and Boystown a visit

After a short but excellent entertainment program consisting of music from a traditional rondalla, a couple of songs rendered capably by the Boystown choir, some folk and modern dance numbers, and the stirring "God Bless America," Ambassador Kenney is invited to address the said student-body (short along with the other guests, including her associates from the US Embassy and USAID).

Also in the party are the SOM benefactors who saw the candidate for this ambassadorial visit: Barclaire Glen Washington Sycip and Baronne Ruth Madrid Perez, and her husband Alec, who donated recently a chunk of the set aside room in favor of their late son Louie.

Kindness

"You are so lucky and should be so proud to be Filipinos. And those I see filipinos you can be proud of as Filipinos, and that is your kindness," Ms Kenney avowers, shifting the talks from one hand to the other.

In fact, she is spot on. SOM educational institutions do thrive on kindness. As soon as they get jobs, SOM graduates give a percentage of their earnings to help the next batch of students get an education.

Donations from corporate partners come in cash or in kind, such as additional facilities, computers, books, and training. Gsm Corporate gave plane tickets recently to the students who came from Palawan so they could spend the Christmas holiday with their families.

With over 3,000 students at Girlstown and over 2,000 at Boystown, one can only sigh at the idea of the budget requirement, and this is just in Cebu. The Cebu campuses have a total capacity of almost 5,000.

Sister Nony Espaliger, former principal of Boystown in Cebu and now based in Boystown, Cebu, gives a good example of what kind of upkeep the large student population requires. "By the time the bushes is done with the last head, it is time again to cut the hair of the first boy," she says with a laugh.

Campus tour

During the campus tour, girls—lighthearted at Boystown, their observation overcome makes it less well the premises are maintained and how every nook and corner looks so clean. The landscaping is simple yet beautiful. Decorations and classrooms are limited in their serene severity. Bright. Pure tropical ambiance. There are workshops for culinary arts, sewing and other skills. Physical fitness and athletics are pursued on campus via 20 basketball courts, a semi-Olympic size outdoor swimming pool and a indoor mini-swimming pool with a secret field.

Pizza Hut Book It! program encourages kids to read

Washington in its commitment to quality education. Words on, Tagaytay Complex Pizza Hut re-launched its Book It! Reading Incentive Program in time for school year 2009. Now in its third year, the project aims to encourage children to read and raise their comprehension skills through a series of completely different modules, fun-filled reading monitoring materials, and delicious rewards.

Since its inception in 2007, the Pizza Hut Book It! program has helped start the school year right by helping schools make it true to reading among their students through monthly reading goals set by teachers inside the classrooms, and at home, and rewards centered that make studying a more enjoyable and exciting experience," explained Elaine Guzman, VP at Pizza Hut. This year, the highly successful program has been extended and will run from January 15 to March 15, 2009 to adjust to the delay of the start of classes in most private schools in the country and to accommodate all grade-one students in summer schools.

To enroll their students in the program, a school must be willing to adopt the program and partner with a Pizza Hut restaurant within its vicinity. Participating grade one students will be given reading monitoring materials to ensure that they read on a regular basis, as well as a set of goals which will have to be accomplished within the month. Every child who accomplishes the month's reading goals inside the classroom and at home will receive a Pizza Award Certificate which may be exchanged for a free Pizza Hut Books Pan Pizza. The program, which will run from January 15 to January 31 '09, will also provide children with fun-filled experiences that make reading inside the classroom and at home more interesting, simple and exciting.

Registered Grade 1 pupils will also be given a Book It! Recognition Card that they have to take filled with six stickers within the program period. One sticker will be given for every month that the child receives his/her FREE Books Pan Pizza at any participating Pizza Hut restaurant nationwide. To further encourage students to finish the entire program, students who manage to complete all six reading goals and get six stickers on their recognition cards will be given an All-Star Reader certificate and a medal of recognition from Pizza Hut.

"Pizza Hut wants to share and give back to the community some of the blessings it has received during the 25 years of operation in the business through its nationwide Book It! reading incentive program. We encourage the schools to take advantage of this program's partnership with Pizza Hut for the Book It! program as early as possible. It is fun and easy way that our students wouldn't want to miss," added Guzman.

To date, Book It! has partnered with more than 100 private schools and 16 public schools, and has given out rewards to more than 15,000 students. It was endorsed by the Department of Education through its Memorandum No. 63, series of 2008. For more information regarding the program, interested parties may visit www.bookit.com.ph, or drop by any Pizza Hut restaurant in Metro Manila. Interested enrollees should inquire at their school regarding enrollment in the Pizza Hut Book It! program.

SECOND year students using copies of the Magellan dictionary by Bench under the Initiative in Education program

LEVINE workshop where senior students produce educational software for SOM students, as well as outside orders

ONE OF THE BOYS. Ambassador Kenney joins the students of SOM Boystown after the welcome program held at their new complex located just in the east barrio of Lahug, Cebu.